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The writings of Mrs. Humphry Ward

Humphry Ward

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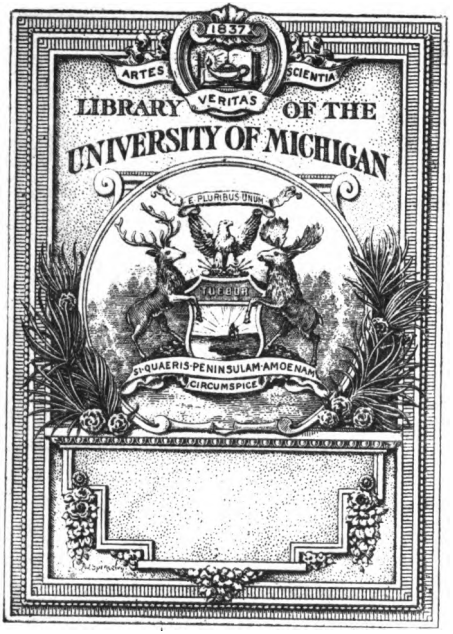
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Westmoreland Edition

THE WRITINGS OF MRS HUMPHRY WARD

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY THE AUTHOR

VOLUME XV

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"But, Roger, what can you do?"

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THE WRITINGS OF
Mary Augusta
MRS HUMPHRY WARD

DAPHNE
(MARRIAGE À LA MODE)

CANADIAN BORN
(LADY MERTON, COLONIST)

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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1912

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DAPHNE

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TO

L. C. W.

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INTRODUCTION

THE story of 'Daphne' was the fruit of a chance conversation with an eminent American at Philadelphia in the spring of 1908. I was then feeling the full pleasure and exhilaration of a first visit to the States. With the gentleman sitting beside me at dinner I discussed many things — the emigrant stream for ever flowing in through Ellis Island, and the astonishing re-creative and assimilative power shewn by the nation which receives it; the modification of New England by the French-Canadian invasion; American artists and writers; American fortunes, and what not; when, suddenly, my companion turned to me and said: — 'But these things are trifles. The really vital and significant thing in America to-day — have you found it out? — is the complete transformation of the idea of marriage which is going on amongst us.'

And he went on to amplify his remark in the spirit of the utterance which I have put into the mouth of the 'journalist' at the White House party described in this book.

The incident sank into my mind, and ultimately produced the story of Daphne Floyd. What my companion laid stress on, it will be observed, was not so much the evils of the divorce laws in themselves as — 'the transformation of *the idea* of marriage' — the tendency, that is, already discernible in the minds of normal young people in the States, to look upon mar-

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riage as an arrangement dissoluble at pleasure, together with the profound consequences to the individual of change in some of those fundamental conceptions which make the atmosphere and environment of life. Things become possible and familiar which had been hitherto excluded from discussion by the barrier of unconscious and unbroken habit; and with possibility — which is liberty — comes temptation, or rather a number of fresh testings of the will and conscience, fresh choices between right and wrong.

To this first suggestion others were subsequently added, especially those drawn from the anomalous state of the laws governing the intermarriage of English and American subjects. The story of Roger Barnes shaped itself, and on my return from the States in the summer of 1908, I began to write, finishing it, as far as I remember, early in the following year. The idea in my mind was to shew both the temptation and the cruelty of a lax marriage law. My own country was and is alive with suggestions of change, — witness the establishment of the recent Commission on Divorce and the evidence taken before it. On the one hand I found myself upholding the equality of men and women in the matter of divorce; resenting what appeared to be the arrogant attitude of extreme opinion in the Anglican church towards the whole subject; and eager to give the same relief to the poor as to the rich; while, on the other hand, to multiply the causes of divorce, as they have been multiplied in some of the States of the American Union, seemed to me the shortest and sharpest road to break down the sacredness, the ever-active discipline of marriage, that has yet been

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devised. And if the discipline of marriage is important for those who, morally, are the privileged and exceptional few, it is infinitely more so for the weak and tempted many. What the broad relaxation of it means for the ordinary weak and commonplace man, or for the ordinary vain and passionate woman — that was what I tried to handle. Perhaps, especially, did I wish to illustrate what it means for the commonplace man, in whose life marriage and fatherhood represent often the only stays against temptations which are unintelligible to most women.

I wished then to shew the effect of a lax divorce law, and an anomalous international law, acting upon two very ordinary people — Roger and Daphne Barnes. Roger Barnes is spendthrift and self-indulgent; he marries for money, having deserted his first sweetheart for the same reason. So far there is nothing to be said for the young man. All the same he comes of a decent stock, and there is good stuff in him. After marriage the instincts of his class which are normal, law-abiding, kindly, begin to come out strongly; he develops a passionate affection for his little girl, and a wife willing to shew him the patience of love might have shaped him almost as she would. But Daphne is passionate and conceited; Roger, foolish; and an intriguing woman makes mischief. There is a quarrel, and instantly the temptation to divorce, bred in her by American conditions, rises in the wife's mind. She yields; and the two lives are wrecked.

The climax of the book lies, of course, in the scene in the attic, where Roger has just painfully taken the turn towards good, worked on by the most ordinary

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human motives — the only real educators of the world; and Daphne, intoxicated by the mere easiness of revenge, breaks in upon him for his ruin.

This seemed to me a subject worth a story; and I was puzzled and distressed, when it appeared, to find that in the States the little tale was too often regarded as shewing an unfriendly mind towards America. In matters of this kind, '*qui s'excuse s'accuse*,' and I shall not stay to point out how the story embodied — for me — not an English, but an American criticism of certain American conditions, which was constantly in my ears during my sojourn in the States. And if the sketch of Daphne leaves an ugly and disagreeable impression, let me appeal from her to the full-length portrait of Lucy Foster in 'Eleanor,' as from an act of criticism to an act of love! Only, neither the English nor the American world consists wholly of the good and the beautiful!

Meanwhile, as I turn over the pages again of the dismal little story, so many recollections rise upon me, that are not dismal, but wholly delightful! — of Washington in its spring dress, of a hospitable kindness, ever fresh, delicate, inventive, of the shrewd yet frank faces of men, of the endless variety and charm of women, of the glorious coast of Newport, and that book-filled study in Emerson's Concord house, so closely, strangely akin to similar rooms in similar houses known to me as a child, the houses of Wordsworth, or Arnold, or Southey, in the Westmoreland valleys; of Harvard, its president and its 'boys'; of those great primary schools in New York, where the future nation is being fashioned by a chemistry new to civilization. I was

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keenly conscious at the time that I saw it all glorified, that a heart much touched is rather a hindrance than a help to the observing brain. Was it some unconscious reaction against this sense of a pleasure and gratitude that had made calm judgement impossible, which led me, on coming home, to a criticism rather than a pæan? If so, in the last resort, it is the very delightfulness of America to the English traveller that is responsible for 'Daphne.'

MARY A. WARD.

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PART I

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DAPHNE

CHAPTER I

A STIFLING hot day!' General Hobson lifted his hat and mopped his forehead indignantly. 'What on earth this place can be like in June I can't conceive! The tenth of April, and I'll be bound the thermometer's somewhere near eighty in the shade. You never find the English climate playing you these tricks.'

Roger Barnes looked at his uncle with amusement.

'Don't you like heat, Uncle Archie? Ah, but I forgot, it's American heat.'

'I like a climate you can depend on,' said the General, quite conscious that he was talking absurdly, yet none the less determined to talk, by way of relief to some obscure annoyance. 'Here we are sweltering in this abominable heat, and in New York last week they had a blizzard, and here, even, it was cold enough to give me rheumatism. The climate's always in extremes — like the people.'

'I'm sorry to find you don't like the States, Uncle Archie.'

The young man sat down beside his uncle. They were in the deck saloon of a steamer which had left Washington about an hour before for Mount Vernon. Through the open doorway to their left they saw a wide expanse of river, flowing between banks of spring green, and above it thunderous clouds, in a hot blue.

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The saloon, and the decks outside, held a great crowd of passengers, of whom the majority were women.

The tone in which Roger Barnes spoke was good-tempered, but quite perfunctory. Any shrewd observer would have seen that whether his uncle liked the States or not did not in truth matter to him a whit.

'And I consider all the arrangements for this trip most unsatisfactory,' the General continued angrily. 'The steamer's too small, the landing-place is too small, the crowd getting on board was something disgraceful. They'll have a shocking accident one of these days. And what on earth are all these women here for — in the middle of the day? It's not a holiday.'

'I believe it's a teacher's excursion,' said young Barnes absently, his eyes resting on the rows of young women in white blouses and spring hats who sat in close-packed chairs upon the deck — an eager, talkative host.

'H'm — Teachers!' The General's tone was still more pugnacious. 'Going to learn more lies about us, I suppose, that they may teach them to school-children? I was turning over some of their school-books in a shop yesterday. Perfectly abominable! It's monstrous what they teach the children here about what they're pleased to call their War of Independence. All that we did was to ask them to pay something for their own protection. What did it matter to us whether they were mopped up by the Indians, or the French, or not? "But if you want us to go to all the expense and trouble of protecting you, and putting down those fellows, why, hang it," we said, "you must pay some of the bill!" That was all English Ministers asked; and per-

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fectly right too. And as for the men they make such a fuss about, Samuel Adams, and John Adams, and Franklin, and all the rest of the crew, I tell you, the stuff they teach American school-children about them is a poisoning of the wells! Franklin was a man of profligate life, whom I would never have admitted inside my doors! And as for the Adamses — intriguers — canting fellows! — both of them.'

'Well, at least you'll give them George Washington.' As he spoke, Barnes concealed a yawn, followed immediately afterwards by a look of greater alertness, caused by the discovery that a girl sitting not far from the doorway in the crowd outside was certainly pretty.

The red-faced, white-haired General paused a moment before replying, then broke out: 'What George Washington might have been if he had held a straight course I am not prepared to say. As it is, I don't hesitate for a moment! George Washington was nothing more nor less than a rebel — a damned rebel! And what Englishmen mean by joining in the worship of him I've never been able to understand.'

'I say, uncle, take care,' said the young man, looking round him, and observing with some relief that they seemed to have the saloon to themselves. 'These Yankees will stand most things, but —'

'You need n't trouble yourself, Roger,' was the testy reply; 'I am not in the habit of annoying my neighbours. Well now, look here, what I want to know is, what is the meaning of this absurd journey of yours?'

The young man's frown increased. He began to poke

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the floor with his stick. 'I don't know why you call it absurd?'

'To me it seems both absurd and extravagant,' said the other with emphasis. 'The last thing I heard of you was that Burdon and Co. had offered you a place in their office, and that you were prepared to take it. When a man has lost his money and becomes dependent upon others, the sooner he gets to work the better.'

Roger Barnes reddened under the onslaught, and the sulky expression of his handsome mouth became more pronounced. 'I think my mother and I ought to be left to judge for ourselves,' he said rather hotly. 'We have n't asked anybody for money *yet*, Uncle Archie. Burdon and Co. can have me in September just as well as now; and my mother wished me to make some friends over here who might be useful to me.'

'Useful to you. How?'

'I think that's my affair. In this country there are always openings — things turning up — chances — you can't get at home.'

The General gave a disapproving laugh. 'The only chance that'll help you, Roger, at present — excuse me if I speak frankly — is the chance of regular work. Your poor mother has nothing but her small fixed income, and you have n't a farthing to chuck away on what you call chances. Why, your passage by the *Lucania* alone must have cost a pretty penny. I'll bet my hat you came first class.'

The young man was clearly on the brink of an explosion, but controlled himself with an effort. 'I paid the winter rate; and mother who knows the Cunard people very well, got a reduction. I assure you, Uncle

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Archie, neither mother nor I is a fool, and we know quite well what we are about.'

As he spoke he raised himself with energy, and looked his companion in the face.

The General, surveying him, was mollified, as usual, by nothing in the world but the youth's extraordinary good looks. Roger Barnes's good looks had been, indeed, from his childhood upward the distinguishing and remarkable feature about him. He had been a king among his schoolfellows largely because of them, and of the athletic prowess which went with them; and while at Oxford he had been cast for the part of Apollo in *The Eumenides*, Nature having clearly designed him for it in spite of the lamentable deficiencies in his Greek scholarship, which gave his prompters and trainers so much trouble. Nose, chin, brow, the poising of the head on the shoulders, the large blue eyes, lidded and set with a Greek perfection, the delicacy of the lean, slightly hollow cheeks, combined with the astonishing beauty and strength of the head, crowned with ambrosial curls — these possessions, together with others, had so far made life an easy and triumphant business for their owner. The 'others,' let it be noted, however, had till now always been present; and, chief amongst them, great wealth and an important and popular father. The father was recently dead, as the black band on the young man's arm still testified, and the wealth had suddenly vanished, wholly and completely, in one of the financial calamities of the day. General Hobson, contemplating his nephew, and mollified, as we have said, by his splendid appearance, kept saying to himself: 'He has n't a farthing but what poor Laura

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allows him; he has the tastes of forty thousand a year; a very indifferent education; and what the deuce is he going to do?'

Aloud he said:

'Well, all I know is, I had a deplorable letter last mail from your poor mother.'

The young man turned his head away, his cigarette still poised at his lips. 'Yes, I know — mother's awfully down.'

'Well, certainly your mother was never meant for a poor woman,' said the General, with energy. 'She takes it uncommonly hard.'

Roger, with face still averted, showed no inclination to discuss his mother's character on these lines.

'However, she'll get along all right, if you do your duty by her,' added the General, not without a certain severity.

'I mean to do it, sir.' Barnes rose as he spoke. 'I should think we're getting near Mount Vernon by this time. I'll go and look.'

He made his way to the outer deck, the General following. The old soldier, as he moved through the crowd of chairs in the wake of his nephew, was well aware of the attention excited by the young man. The eyes of many damsels were upon him; and, while the girls looked and said nothing, their mothers laughed and whispered to each other as the young Apollo passed.

Standing at the side of the steamer, the uncle and nephew perceived that the river had widened to a still more stately breadth, and that, on the southern bank, a white building, high placed, had come into view. The

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excursionists crowded to look, expressing their admiration for the natural scene and their sense of its patriotic meaning in a frank, enthusiastic chatter, which presently enveloped the General, standing in a silent endurance like a rock among the waves.

'Is n't it fine to think of his coming back here to die, so simply, when he'd made a nation?' said a young girl — perhaps from Omaha — to her companion. 'Was n't it just lovely?'

Her voice, restrained, yet warm with feeling, annoyed General Hobson. He moved away, and as they hung over the taffrail he said, with suppressed venom to his companion: 'Much good it did them to be "made a nation"! Look at their press — look at their corruption — their divorce scandals!'

Barnes laughed, and threw his cigarette-end into the swift brown water.

'Upon my word, Uncle Archie, I can't play up to you. As far as I've gone, I like America and the Americans.'

'Which means, I suppose, that your mother gave you some introductions to rich people in New York, and they entertained you?' said the General dryly.

'Well, is there any crime in that? I met a lot of uncommonly nice people.'

'And did n't particularly bless me when I wired to you to come here?'

The young man laughed again and paused a moment before replying.

'I'm always very glad to come and keep you company, Uncle Archie.'

The old General reddened a little. Privately, he

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knew very well that his telegram summoning young Barnes from New York had been an act of tyranny — mild, elderly tyranny. He was not amusing himself in Washington, where he was paying a second visit after an absence of twenty years. His English soul was disturbed and affronted by a wholly new realisation of the strength of America, by the giant forces of the young nation, as they are to be felt pulsing in the Federal City. He was up in arms for the Old World, wondering sorely and secretly what the New might do with her in the times to come, and foreseeing an ever-increasing deluge of unlovely things — ideals, principles, manners — flowing from this western civilisation, under which his own gods were already half buried, and would soon be hidden beyond recovery. And in this despondency which possessed him, in spite of the attentions of Embassies, and luncheons at the White House, he had heard that Roger was in New York, and could not resist the temptation to send for him. After all, Roger was his heir. Unless the boy flagrantly misbehaved himself, he would inherit General Hobson's money and small estate in Northamptonshire. Before the death of Roger's father this prospective inheritance, indeed, had not counted for very much in the family calculations. The General had even felt a shyness in alluding to a matter so insignificant in comparison with the general scale on which the Barnes family lived. But since the death of Barnes *père*, and the complete pecuniary ruin revealed by that event, Roger's expectations from his uncle had assumed a new importance. The General was quite aware of it. A year before this date he would never have dreamed of summoning

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Mount Vernon, the Home of Washington, in Fairfax County, Virginia

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Roger to attend him at a moment's notice. That he had done so, and that Roger had obeyed him, showed how closely even the family relation may depend on pecuniary circumstance.

The steamer swung round to the landing-place under the hill of Mount Vernon. Again, in disembarkation, there was a crowd and rush which set the General's temper on edge. He emerged from it, hot and breathless, after haranguing the functionary at the gates on the inadequacy of the arrangements and the likelihood of an accident. Then he and Roger strode up the steep path, beside beds of blue periwinkles, and under old trees just bursting into leaf. A spring sunshine was in the air and on the grass, which had already donned its 'livelier emerald.' The air quivered with heat, and the blue dome of sky diffused it. Here and there a magnolia in full flower on the green slopes spread its splendour of white or pinkish blossom to the sun; the great river, shimmering and streaked with light, swept round the hill, and out into a pearly distance; and on the height the old pillared house with its flanking colonnades stood under the thinly green trees in a sharp light and shade which emphasised all its delightful qualities — made, as it were, the most of it, in response to the eagerness of the crowd now flowing round it.

Half-way up the hill Roger suddenly raised his hat.

'Who is it?' said the General, putting up his eyeglass.

'The girl we met last night and her brother.'

'Captain Boyson? So it is. They seem to have a party with them.'

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The lady whom young Barnes had greeted moved toward the Englishmen, followed by her brother.

'I did n't know we were to meet to-day,' she said gayly, with a mocking look at Roger. 'I thought you said you were bored — and going back to New York.'

Roger was relieved to see that his uncle, engaged in shaking hands with the American officer, had not heard this remark. Tact was certainly not Miss Boyson's strong point.

'I am sure I never said anything of the kind,' he said, looking brazenly down upon her; 'nothing in the least like it.'

'Oh! oh!' the lady protested, with an extravagant archness. 'Mrs. Phillips, this is Mr. Barnes. We were just talking of him, were n't we?'

An elderly lady, quietly dressed in grey silk, turned, bowed, and looked curiously at the Englishman.

'I hear you and Miss Boyson discovered some common friends last night.'

'We did, indeed. Miss Boyson posted me up in a lot of the people I have been seeing in New York. I am most awfully obliged to her,' said Barnes. His manner was easy and forthcoming, the manner of one accustomed to feel himself welcome and considered.

'I behaved like a walking "Who's Who," only I was much more interesting, and did n't tell half as many lies,' said the girl, in a high penetrating voice. 'Daphne, let me introduce you to Mr. Barnes. Mr. Barnes — Miss Floyd; Mr. Barnes — Mrs. Verrier.'

Two ladies beyond Mrs. Phillips made vague inclinations, and young Barnes raised his hat. The whole party walked on up the hill. The General and

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Captain Boyson fell into a discussion of some military news of the morning. Roger Barnes was mostly occupied with Miss Boyson, who had a turn for monopoly; and he could only glance occasionally at the two ladies with Mrs. Phillips. But he was conscious that the whole group made a distinguished appearance. Among the hundreds of young women streaming over the lawn they were clearly marked out by their carriage and their clothes — especially their clothes — as belonging to the fastidious cosmopolitan class, between whom and the young school-teachers from the West, in their white cotton blouses, leathern belts, and neat short skirts, the links were few. Miss Floyd, indeed, was dressed with great simplicity. A white muslin dress, *à la* Romney, with a rose at the waist, and a black-and-white Romney hat deeply shading the face beneath — nothing could have been plainer; yet it was a simplicity not to be had for the asking, a calculated, a Parisian simplicity; while her companion, Mrs. Verrier, was attired in what the fashion-papers would have called a 'creation in mauve.' And Roger knew quite enough about women's dress to be aware that it was a creation that meant dollars. She was a tall, dark-eyed, olive-skinned woman, thin almost to emaciation: and young Barnes noticed that, while Miss Floyd talked much, Mrs. Verrier answered little, and smiled less. She moved with a languid step, and looked absently about her. Roger could not make up his mind whether she was American or English.

In the house itself the crowd was almost unmanageable. The General's ire was roused afresh when he was warned off the front door by the polite official on guard,

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and made to mount a back stair in the midst of a panting multitude.

'I really cannot congratulate you on your management of these affairs,' he said severely to Captain Boyson, as they stood at last, breathless and hustled, on the first-floor landing. 'It is most improper, I may say dangerous, to admit such a number at once. And, as for seeing the house, it is simply impossible. I shall make my way down as soon as possible, and go for a walk.'

Captain Boyson looked perplexed. General Hobson was a person of eminence; Washington had been very civil to him; and the American officer felt a kind of host's responsibility.

'Wait a moment; I'll try and find somebody.' He disappeared, and the party maintained itself with difficulty in a corner of the landing against the pressure of a stream of damsels, who crowded to the open doors of the rooms, looked through the gratings which bar the entrance without obstructing the view, chattered, and moved on. General Hobson stood against the wall, a model of angry patience. Cecilia Boyson, glancing at him with a laughing eye, said in Roger's ear: 'How sad it is that your uncle dislikes us so!'

'Us? What do you mean?'

'That he hates America so. Oh, don't say he does n't, because I've watched him, at one, two, three parties. He thinks we're a horrid, noisy, vulgar people, with most unpleasant voices, and he thanks God for the Atlantic — and hopes he may never see us again.'

'Well, of course, if you're so certain about it, there's no good in contradicting you. Did you say that lady's

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name was Floyd? Could I have seen her last week in New York?'

'Quite possible. Perhaps you heard something about her?'

'No,' said Barnes, after thinking a moment. 'I remember — somebody pointed her out at the opera.'

His companion looked at him with a kind of hard amusement. Cecilia Boyson was only five-and-twenty, but there was already something in her that foretold the formidable old maid.

'Well, when people begin upon Daphne Floyd,' she said, 'they generally go through with it. Ah! here comes Alfred.'

Captain Boyson, pushing his way through the throng, announced to his sister and General Hobson that he had found the curator in charge of the house, who sent a message by him to the effect that if only the party would wait till four o'clock, the official closing hour, he himself would have great pleasure in showing them the house when all the tourists of the day had taken their departure.

'Then,' said Miss Floyd, smiling at the General, 'let us go and sit in the garden, and feel ourselves aristocratic and superior.'

The General's brow smoothed. Voice and smile were alike engaging. Their owner was not exactly pretty, but she had very large dark eyes, and a small glowing face, set in a profusion of hair. Her neck, the General thought, was the slenderest he had ever seen, and the slight round lines of her form spoke of youth in its first delicate maturity. He followed her obediently, and they were all soon in the garden again, and free of

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the crowd. Miss Floyd led the way across the grass with the General.

'Ah! now you will see the General will begin to like us,' said Miss Boyson. 'Daphne has got him in hand.'

Her tone was slightly mocking. Barnes observed the two figures in front of them, and remarked that Miss Floyd had a 'very — well — a very foreign look.'

'Not English, you mean? — or American? Well, naturally. Her mother was a Spaniard — a South American — from Buenos Ayres. That's why she is so dark, and so graceful.'

'I never saw a prettier dress,' said Barnes, following the slight figure with his eyes. 'It's so simple.'

His companion laughed again. The manner of the laugh puzzled her companion, but, just as he was about to put a question, the General and the young lady paused in front, to let the rest of the party come up with them. Miss Floyd proposed a seat a little way down the slope, where they might wait the half-hour appointed.

That half-hour passed quickly for all concerned. In looking back upon it afterwards two of the party were conscious that it had all hung upon one person. Daphne Floyd sat beside the General, who paid her a half-reluctant, half-fascinated attention. Without any apparent effort on her part she became indeed the centre of the group who sat or lay on the grass. All faces were turned towards her, and presently all ears listened for her remarks. Her talk was young and vivacious, nothing more. But all she said came, as it were, steeped in personality, a personality so energetic, so charged with movement and with action that it arrested the

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spectators — not always agreeably. It was like the passage of a train through the darkness, when, for the moment, the quietest landscape turns to fire and force.

The comparison suggested itself to Captain Boyson as he lay watching her, only to be received with an inward mockery, half bitter, half amused. This girl was always awakening in him these violent or desperate images. Was it her fault that she possessed those brilliant eyes — eyes, as it seemed, of the typical, essential woman? — and that downy brunette skin, with the tinge in it of damask red? — and that instinctive art of lovely gesture in which her whole being seemed to express itself? Boyson, who was not only a rising soldier, but an excellent amateur artist, knew every line of the face by heart. He had drawn Miss Daphne from the life on several occasions; and from memory scores of times. He was not likely to draw her from life any more; and thereby hung a tale. As far as he was concerned the train had passed — in flame and fury — leaving an echoing silence behind it.

What folly! He turned resolutely to Mrs. Verrier, and tried to discuss with her an exhibition of French art recently opened in Washington. In vain. After a few sentences, the talk between them dropped, and both he and she were once more watching Miss Floyd, and joining in the conversation whenever she chose to draw them in.

As for Roger Barnes, he too was steadily subjugated — up to a certain point. He was not sure that he liked Miss Floyd, or her conversation. She was so much mistress of herself and of the company, that his masculine vanity occasionally rebelled. A little flirt! — that

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gave herself airs. It startled his English mind that at twenty — for she could be no more — a girl should so take the floor, and hold the stage. Sometimes he turned his back upon her — almost; and Cecilia Boyson held him. But, if there was too much of the 'eternal womanly' in Miss Floyd, there was not enough in Cecilia Boyson. He began to discover also that she was too clever for him, and was in fact talking down to him. Some of the things that she said to him about New York and Washington puzzled him extremely. She was, he supposed, intellectual; but the intellectual women in England did not talk in the same way. He was equal to them, or flattered himself that he was; but Miss Boyson was beyond him. He was getting into great difficulties with her, when suddenly Miss Floyd addressed him:

'I am sure I saw you in New York, at the opera?'

She bent over to him as she spoke, and lowered her voice. Her look was merry, perhaps a little satirical. It put him on his guard.

'Yes, I was there. You were pointed out to me.'

'You were with some old friends of mine. I suppose they gave you an account of me?'

'They were beginning it; but then Melba began to sing, and some horrid people in the next box said "Hush!"'

She studied him in a laughing silence a moment, her chin on her hand, then said:

'That is the worst of the opera; it stops so much interesting conversation.'

'You don't care for the music?'

'Oh, I am a musician!' she said quickly. 'I teach it.

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But I am like the mad King of Bavaria — I want an opera-house to myself.'

'You teach it?' he said, in amazement.

She nodded, smiling. At that moment a bell rang. Captain Boyson rose.

'That's the signal for closing. I think we ought to be moving up.'

They strolled slowly towards the house, watching the stream of excursionists pour out of the house and gardens, and wind down the hill; sounds of talk and laughter filled the air, and the western sun touched the spring hats and dresses.

'The holidays end to-morrow,' said Daphne Floyd demurely, as she walked beside young Barnes. And she looked smilingly at the crowd of young women, as though claiming solidarity with them.

A teacher? A teacher of music? — with that self-confidence — that air as though the world belonged to her! The young man was greatly mystified. But he reminded himself that he was in a democratic country where all men — and especially all women — are equal. Not that the young women now streaming to the steamboat were Miss Floyd's equals. The notion was absurd. All that appeared to be true was that Miss Floyd, in any circumstances, would be, and was, the equal of anybody.

'How charming your friend is!' he said presently to Cecilia Boyson, as they lingered on the verandah, waiting for the curator, in a scene now deserted. 'She tells me she is a teacher of music.'

Cecilia Boyson looked at him in amazement, and made him repeat his remark. As he did so, his uncle

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called him, and he turned away. Miss Boyson leant against one of the pillars of the verandah, shaking with suppressed laughter.

But at that moment the curator, a gentle, grey-haired man, appeared, shaking hands with the General, and bowing to the ladies. He gave them a little discourse on the house and its history, as they stood on the verandah; and private conversation was no longer possible.

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CHAPTER II

A SUDDEN hush had fallen upon Mount Vernon. From the river below came the distant sounds of the steamer, which, with its crowds safe on board, was now putting off for Washington. But the lawns and paths of the house, and the formal garden behind it, and all its simple rooms upstairs and down, were now given back to the spring and silence, save for this last party of sightseers. The curator, after his preliminary lecture on the verandah, took them within; the railings across the doors were removed; they wandered in and out as they pleased.

Perhaps, however, there were only two persons among the six now following the curator to whom the famous place meant anything more than a means of idling away a warm afternoon. General Hobson carried his white head proudly through it, saying little or nothing. It was the house of a man who had wrenched half a continent from Great Britain; the English Tory had no intention whatever of bowing the knee. On the other hand, it was the house of a soldier and a gentleman, representing old English traditions, tastes, and manners. No modern blatancy, no Yankee smartness anywhere. Simplicity and moderate wealth, combined with culture — witness the books of the library — with land-owning, a family coach, and church on Sundays: these things the Englishman understood. Only

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the slaves, in the picture of Mount Vernon's past, were strange to him.

They stood at length in the death-chamber, with its low white bed, and its balcony overlooking the river.

'This, ladies, is the room in which General Washington died,' said the curator, patiently repeating the familiar sentence. 'It is, of course, on that account sacred to every true American.'

He bowed his head instinctively as he spoke. The General looked round him in silence. His eye was caught by the old hearth, and by the iron plate at the back of it, bearing the letters G. W. and some scroll-work. There flashed into his mind a vision of the December evening on which Washington passed away, the flames flickering in the chimney, the winds breathing round the house and over the snowbound landscape outside, the dying man in that white bed, and around him, hovering invisibly, the generations of the future.

'He was a traitor to his king and country!' he repeated to himself, firmly. Then as his patriotic mind was not disturbed by a sense of humour, he added the simple reflexion — 'But it is, of course, natural that Americans should consider him a great man.'

The French window beside the bed was thrown open, and these privileged guests were invited to step on to the balcony. Daphne Floyd was handed out by young Barnes. They hung over the white balustrade together. An evening light was on the noble breadth of river; its surface of blue and gold gleamed through the boughs of the trees which girdled the house;

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blossoms of wild cherry, of dogwood, and magnolia sparkled amid the coverts of young green.

Roger Barnes remarked, with sincerity, as he looked about him, that it was a very pretty place, and he was glad he had not missed it. Miss Floyd made an absent reply, being in fact occupied in studying the speaker. It was, so to speak, the first time she had really observed him; and, as they paused on the balcony together, she was suddenly possessed by the same impression as that which had mollified the General's scolding on board the steamer. He was indeed handsome, the young Englishman! — a magnificent figure of a man, in height and breadth and general proportions; and in addition, as it seemed to her, possessed of an absurd and superfluous beauty of feature. What does a man want with such good looks? This was perhaps the girl's first instinctive feeling. She was, indeed, a little dazzled by her new companion, now that she began to realise him. As compared with the average man in Washington or New York, here was an exception — an Apollo! — for she too thought of the Sun-god. Miss Floyd could not remember that she had ever had to do with an Apollo before; young Barnes, therefore, was so far an event, a sensation. In the opera-house she had been vaguely struck by a handsome face. But here, in the freedom of outdoor dress and movement, he seemed to her a physical king of men; and, at the same time, his easy manner — which, however, was neither conceited nor ill-bred — showed him conscious of his advantages.

As they chatted on the balcony she put him through his paces a little. He had been, it seemed, at Eton and

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Oxford; and she supposed that he belonged to the rich English world. His mother was a Lady Barnes; his father, she gathered, was dead; and he was travelling, no doubt, in the lordly English way, to get a little knowledge of the barbarians outside, before he settled down to his own kingdom, and the ways thereof. She envisaged a big Georgian house in a spreading park, like scores that she had seen in the course of motoring through England the year before.

Meanwhile, the dear young man was evidently trying to talk to her, without too much reference to the gilt gingerbread of this world. He did not wish that she should feel herself carried into regions where she was not at home, so that his conversation ran amicably on music. Had she learned it abroad? He had a cousin who had been trained at Leipsic; was n't teaching it trying sometimes — when people had no ear? Delicious! She kept it up, talking with smiles of 'my pupils' and 'my class,' while they wandered after the others upstairs to the dark low-roofed room above the death-chamber, where Martha Washington spent the last years of her life, in order that from the high dormer window she might command the tomb on the slope below, where her dead husband lay. The curator told the well-known story. Mrs. Verrier, standing beside him, asked some questions, showed indeed some animation.

'She shut herself up here? She lived in this garret? That she might always see the tomb? That is really true?'

Barnes, who did not remember to have heard her speak before, turned at the sound of her voice, and

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looked at her curiously. She wore an expression — bitter or incredulous — which, somehow, amused him. As they descended again to the garden he communicated his amusement — discreetly — to Miss Floyd.

'Did Mrs. Verrier imply that no one who was not a fool could show her grief as Mrs. Washington did? That it was, in fact, a sign of being a fool to regret your husband?'

'Did she say that?' asked Miss Floyd quickly.

'Not like that, of course, but —'

They had now reached the open air again, and found themselves crossing the front court to the kitchen-garden. Daphne Floyd did not wait till Roger should finish his sentence. She turned on him a face which was grave if not reproachful.

'I suppose you know Mrs. Verrier's story?'

'Why, I never saw her before! I hope I have n't said anything I ought n't to have said?'

'Everybody knows it here,' said Daphne slowly. 'Mrs. Verrier married three years ago. She married a Jew — a New Yorker — who had changed his name. You know Jews are not in what we call "society" over here? But Madeleine thought she could do it; she was in love with him, and she meant to be able to do without society. But she could n't do without society; and presently she began to dine out, and go to parties by herself — he urged her to. Then, after a bit, people did n't ask her as much as before; she was n't happy; and her people began to talk to him about a divorce — naturally they had been against her marrying him all along. He said — as they and she pleased. Then, one night about a year ago, he took the train to Niagara —

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of course it was a very commonplace thing to do — and two days afterwards he was found, thrown up by the whirlpool; you know, where all the suicides are found!'

Barnes stopped short in front of his companion, his face flushing.

'What a horrible story!' he said, with emphasis.

Miss Floyd nodded.

'Yes, poor Madeleine has never got over it.'

The young man still stood riveted.

'Of course Mrs. Verrier herself had nothing to do with the talk about divorce?'

Something in his tone roused a combative instinct in his companion. She, too, coloured, and drew herself up.

'Why should n't she? She was miserable. The marriage had been a great mistake.'

'And you allow divorce for that?' said the man, wondering. 'Oh, of course I know every State is different, and some States are worse than others. But, somehow, I never came across a case like that — first hand — before.'

He walked on slowly beside his companion, who held herself a little stiffly.

'I don't know why you should talk in that way,' she said at last, breaking out in a kind of resentment, 'as though all our American views are wrong! Each nation arranges these things for itself. You have the laws that suit you; you must allow us those that suit us.'

Barnes paused again, his face expressing a still more complete astonishment.

'You say that?' he said. 'You!'

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'And why not?'

'But — but you are so young!' he said, evidently finding a difficulty in putting his impressions. 'I beg your pardon — I ought not to talk about it at all. But it was so odd that —'

'That I knew anything about Mrs. Verrier's affairs?' said Miss Floyd, with a rather uncomfortable laugh. 'Well, you see, American girls are not like English ones. We don't pretend not to know what everybody knows.'

'Of course,' said Roger hurriedly; 'but you would n't think it a fair and square thing to do?'

'Think what?'

'Why, to marry a man, and then talk of divorcing him because people did n't invite you to their parties.'

'She was very unhappy,' said Daphne stubbornly.

'Well, by Jove!' cried the young man, 'she does n't look very happy now!'

'No,' Miss Floyd admitted. 'No. There are many people who think she'll never get over it.'

'Well, I give it up.' The Apollo shrugged his handsome shoulders. 'You say it was she who proposed to divorce him? — yet when the wretched man removes himself, then she breaks her heart!'

'Naturally she did n't mean him to do it in that way,' said the girl, with impatience. 'Of course you misunderstood me entirely! — *entirely!*' she added with an emphasis which suited with her heightened colour and evidently ruffled feelings.

Young Barnes looked at her with embarrassment. What a queer, hot-tempered girl! Yet there was something in her which attracted him. She was graceful even in her impatience. Her slender neck, and the dark

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head upon it, her little figure in the white muslin, her dainty arms and hands — these points in her delighted an honest eye, quite accustomed to appraise the charms of women. But, by George! she took herself seriously, this little music-teacher. The air of wilful command about her, the sharpness with which she had just rebuked him, amazed and challenged him.

'I am very sorry if I misunderstood you,' he said, a little on his dignity; 'but I thought you —'

'You thought I sympathised with Mrs. Verrier? So I do; though of course I am awfully sorry that such a dreadful thing happened. But you'll find, Mr. Barnes, that American girls —' The colour rushed into her small olive cheeks. 'Well, we know all about the old ideas, and we know also too well that there's only one life, and we don't mean to have that one spoilt. The old notions of marriage — your English notions,' cried the girl facing him — 'make it tyranny! Why should people stay together when they see it's a mistake? We say everybody shall have their chance. And not one chance only, but more than one. People find out in marriage what they could n't find out before, and so —'

'You let them chuck it just when they're tired of it?' laughed Barnes. 'And what about the —'

'The children?' said Miss Floyd calmly. 'Well, of course, that has to be very carefully considered. But how can it do children any good to live in an unhappy home?'

'Had Mrs. Verrier any children?'

'Yes, one little girl.'

'I suppose she meant to keep her?'

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'Why, of course.'

'And the father did n't care?'

'Well, I believe he did,' said Daphne unwillingly. 'Yes, that was very sad. He was quite devoted to her.'

'And you think that's all right?' Barnes looked at his companion, smiling.

'Well, of course, it was a pity,' she said, with fresh impatience; 'I admit it was a pity. But then, why did she ever marry him? That was the horrible mistake.'

'I suppose she thought she liked him.'

'Oh, it was he who was so desperately in love with her. He plagued her into doing it.'

'Poor devil!' said Barnes heartily. — 'All right, we're coming.'

The last words were addressed to General Hobson, waving to them from the kitchen-garden. They hurried on to join the curator, who took the party for a stroll round some of the fields over which George Washington, in his early married life, was accustomed to ride in summer and winter dawns, inspecting his negroes, his plantation, and his barns. The grass in these Southern fields was already high; there were shining fruit trees, blossom-laden, in an orchard copses; and the white dogwood glittered in the woods.

For two people to whom the traditions of the place were dear, this quiet walk through Washington's land had a charm far beyond that of the reconstructed interior of the house. Here were things unaltered and unalterable, boundaries, tracks, woods, haunted still by the figure of the young master and bridegroom who brought Patsy Curtis there in 1759. To the grey-haired curator every foot of them was sacred and familiar; he

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knew these fields and the records of them better than any detail of his own personal affairs; for years now he had lived in spirit with Washington, through all the hours of the Mount Vernon day; his life was ruled by one great ghost, so that everything actual was comparatively dim. Boyson too, a fine soldier and a fine intelligence, had a mind stored with Washingtoniana. Every now and then he and the curator fell back on each other's company. They knew well that the others were not worthy of their opportunity; although General Hobson, seeing that most of the memories touched belonged to a period before the Revolution, obeyed the dictates of politeness, and made amends for his taciturnity indoors by a talkative vein outside.

Captain Boyson was not, however, wholly occupied with history or reminiscence. He perceived very plainly before the walk was over that the General's good-looking nephew and Miss Daphne Floyd were interested in each other's conversation. When they joined the party in the garden it seemed to him that they had been disputing. Miss Daphne was flushed and a little snappish when spoken to; and the young man looked embarrassed. But presently he saw that they gravitated to each other, and that, whatever chance combination might be formed during the walk, it always ended for a time in the flight ahead of the two figures, the girl in the rose-coloured sash and the tall handsome youth. Towards the end of the walk they became separated from the rest of the party, and only arrived at the little station just in time before the cars started. On this occasion again, they had been clearly arguing and disagreeing; and Daphne had the air of a ruffled bird, her

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dark eyes glittering, her mouth set in the obstinate lines that Boyson knew by heart. But again they sat together in the car, and talked and sparred all the way home; while Mrs. Verrier, in a corner of the carriage, shut her hollow eyes, and laid her thin hands one over the other, and in her purple draperies made a picture *à la Mélisande* which was not lost upon her companions. Boyson's mind registered a good many grim or terse comments, as occasionally he found himself watching this lady. Scarcely a year since that hideous business at Niagara, and here she was in that extravagant dress! He wished his sister would not make a friend of her, and that Daphne Floyd saw less of her. Miss Daphne had quite enough bees in her own bonnet without adopting Mrs. Verrier's.

Meanwhile, it was the General who, on the return journey, was made to serve Miss Boyson's gift for monopoly. She took possession of him in a business-like way, inquiring into his engagements in Washington, his particular friends, his opinion of the place and the people, with a light-handed acuteness which was more than a match for the Englishman's instincts of defence. The General did not mean to give himself away; he intended, indeed, precisely the contrary; but, after every round of conversation Miss Boyson felt herself more and more richly provided with materials for satire at the expense of England and the English tourist, his invincible conceit, insularity, and condescension. She was a clever though tiresome woman; and expressed herself best in letters. She promised herself to write a 'character' of General Hobson in her next letter to an intimate friend, which should be a master-

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piece. Then, having led him successfully through the *rôle* of the comic Englishman abroad, she repaid him with information. She told him, not without some secret amusement at the reprobation it excited, the tragic story of Mrs. Verrier. She gave him a full history of her brother's honourable and brilliant career; and here let it be said that the *précieuse* in her gave way to the sister, and that she talked with feeling. And finally she asked him with a smile whether he admired Miss Floyd. The General, who had in fact been observing Miss Floyd and his nephew with some little uneasiness during the preceding half-hour, replied, guardedly, that Miss Floyd was pretty and picturesque, and apparently a great talker. Was she a native of Washington?

'You never heard of Miss Floyd? — of Daphne Floyd? No? Ah, well!' — and she laughed — 'I suppose I ought to take it as a compliment, of a kind. There are so many rich people now in this queer country of ours that even Daphne Floyds don't matter.'

'Is Miss Floyd so tremendously rich?'

General Hobson turned a quickened countenance upon her, expressing no more than the interest felt by the ordinary man in all societies — more strongly, perhaps, at the present day than ever before — in the mere fact of money. But Miss Boyson gave it at once a personal meaning, and set herself to play on what she scornfully supposed to be the cupidity of the Englishman. She produced, indeed, a full and particular account of Daphne Floyd's parentage, possessions, and prospects, during which the General's countenance represented him with great fidelity. A trace of recal-

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citrance at the beginning — for it was his opinion that Miss Boyson, like most American women, talked decidedly too much — gave way to close attention, then to astonishment, and finally to a very animated observation of Miss Floyd's slender person as she sat a yard or two from him on the other side of the car, laughing, frowning, or chattering with Roger.

'And that poor child has the management of it all?' he said at last, in a tone which did him credit. He himself had lost an only daughter at twenty-one, and he held old-fashioned views as to the helplessness of women.

But Cecilia Boyson again misunderstood him.

'Oh, yes!' she said, with a cool smile. 'Everything is in her own hands — everything! Mrs. Phillips would not dare to interfere. Daphne always has her own way.'

The General said no more. Cecilia Boyson looked out of the window at the darkening landscape, thinking with malice of Daphne's dealings with the male sex. It had been a Sleeping Beauty story so far. Treasure for the winning — a thorn hedge — and slain lovers! The handsome Englishman would try it next, no doubt. All young Englishmen, according to her, were on the lookout for American heiresses. Music-teacher indeed! She would have given a good deal to hear the conversation of the uncle and nephew when the party broke up.

The General and young Barnes made their farewells at the railway station, and took their way on foot to their hotel. Washington was steeped in sunset. The White House, as they passed it, glowed amid its quiet

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trees. Lafayette Square, with its fountains and statues, its white and pink magnolias, its strolling, chatting crowd, the fronts of the houses, the long vistas of tree-lined avenues, the street-cars, the houses, the motors, all the openings and distances of the beautiful, leisurely place — they saw them rosily transfigured under a departing sun, which throughout the day had been weaving the quick spells of a Southern spring.

'Jolly weather!' said Roger, looking about him. 'And a very nice afternoon. How long are you staying here, Uncle Archie?'

'I ought to be off at the end of the week; and of course you want to get back to New York? I say, you seemed to be getting on with that young lady?'

The General turned a rather troubled eye upon his companion.

'She was n't bad fun,' said the young man graciously; 'but rather an odd little thing! We quarrelled about every conceivable subject. And it's queer how much that kind of girl seems to go about in America. She goes everywhere and knows everything. I wonder how she manages it.'

'What kind of girl do you suppose she is?' asked the General, stopping suddenly in the middle of Lafayette Square.

'She told me she taught singing,' said Roger, in a puzzled voice, 'to a class of girls in New York.'

The General laughed.

'She seems to have made a fool of you, my dear boy. She is one of the great heiresses of America.'

Roger's face expressed a proper astonishment.

'Oh! that's it, is it? I thought once or twice there

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was something fishy — she was trying it on. Who told you?'

The General retailed his information. Miss Daphne Floyd was the orphan daughter of an enormously rich and now deceased lumber-king, of the State of Illinois. He had made vast sums by lumbering, and then invested in real estate in Chicago and Buffalo, not to speak of a railway or two, and had finally left his daughter and only child in possession of a fortune generally estimated at more than a million sterling. The money was now entirely in the girl's power. Her trustees had been sent about their business, though Miss Floyd was pleased occasionally to consult them. Mrs. Phillips, her chaperon, had not much influence with her; and it was supposed that Mrs. Verrier advised her more than any one else.

'Good heavens!' was all that young Barnes could find to say when the story was told. He walked on absently, flourishing his stick, his face working under the stress of amused meditation.

At last he brought out:

'You know, Uncle Archie, if you'd heard some of the things Miss Floyd was saying to me, your hair would have stood on end.'

The General raised his shoulders.

'I dare say. I'm too old-fashioned for America. The sooner I clear out the better. Their newspapers make me sick; I hate the hotels — I hate the cooking; and there is n't a nation in Europe I don't feel myself more at home with.'

Roger laughed his clear, good-tempered laugh. 'Oh! I don't feel that way at all. I get on with them capi-

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tally. They're a magnificent people. And, as to Miss Floyd, I did n't mean anything bad, of course. Only the ideas some of the girls here have, and the way they discuss them — well, it beats me!'

'What sort of ideas?'

Roger's handsome brow puckered in the effort to explain. 'They don't think anything's *settled*, you know, as we do at home. Miss Floyd does n't. They think *they've* got to settle a lot of things that English girls don't trouble about, because they're just told to do 'em, or not to do 'em, by the people that look after them!'

'"Everything hatched over again, and hatched different,"' said the General, who was an admirer of George Eliot; 'that's what they'd like, eh? Pooh! That's when they're young. They quiet down, like all the rest of the world.'

Barnes shook his head. 'But they *are* hatching it over again. You meet people here in society you could n't meet at home. And it's all right. The law backs them up.'

'You're talking about divorce!' said the General. 'Aye! it's astounding! The tales one hears in the smoking-room after dinner! In Wyoming, apparently, six months' residence, and there you are. You prove a little cruelty, the husband makes everything perfectly easy, you say a civil good-bye, and the thing's done. Well, they'll pay for it, my dear Roger — they'll pay for it. Nobody ever yet trifled with the marriage law with impunity.'

The energy of the old man's bearing became him.

Through Roger's mind the thought flashed: 'Poor

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dear Uncle Archie! If he'd been a New Yorker he'd never have put up with Aunt Lavinia for thirty years!'

They turned into their hotel, and ordered dinner in an hour's time. Roger found some English letters waiting for him, and carried them off to his room. He opened his mother's first. Lady Barnes wrote a large and straggling hand, which required many sheets and much postage. It might have been observed that her son looked at the sheets for a minute, with a certain distaste, before he began upon them. Yet he was deeply attached to his mother, and it was from her letters week by week that he took his marching orders. If she only would n't ride her ideas quite so hard; if she would sometimes leave him alone to act for himself!

Here it was again — the old story:

'Don't suppose I put these things before you on *my* account. No, indeed; what does it matter what happens to me? It is when I think that you may have to spend your whole life as a clerk in a bank, unless you rouse yourself now (for you know, my dear Roger, though you have very good wits, you're not as frightfully clever as people have to be nowadays) — that I begin to despair. But that is *entirely* in your own hands. You have what is far more valuable than cleverness — you have a delightful disposition, and you are one of the handsomest of men. There! of course, I know you would n't let me say it to you in your presence; but it's true all the same. Any girl should be proud to marry you. There are plenty of rich girls in America; and if you play your cards properly you will make her and yourself happy. The grammar of that is not quite

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right, but you understand me. Find a nice girl — of course a *nice* girl — with a fortune large enough to put you back in your proper sphere; and it does n't matter about me. You will pay my rent, I dare say, and help me through when I want it; but that's nothing. The point is, that I cannot submit to your career being spoiled through your poor father's mad imprudence. You must retrieve yourself — you *must*. Nobody is anything nowadays in the world without money; you know that as well as I do. And besides, there is another reason. You have got to forget the affair of last spring, to put it entirely behind you, to show that horrid woman who threw you over that you will make your life a success in spite of her. Rouse yourself, my dear Roger, and do your best. I hope by now you have forwarded *all* my introductions? You have your opportunity, and I must say you will be a great fool if you don't use it. *Do* use it, my dear boy, for my sake. I am a very unhappy woman; but you might, if you would, bring back a little brightness to my life.'

After he had read the letter, young Barnes sat for some time in a brown study on the edge of his bed. The letter contained only one more repetition of counsels that had been dinned into his ears for months — almost ever since the financial crash which had followed his father's death, and the crash of another sort, concerning himself, which had come so quick upon it. His thoughts returned, as they always did at some hour of the day or night, to the 'horrid woman.' Yes, that had hit him hard; the lad's heart still throbbed with bitterness as he thought of it. He had never felt anything so much; he did n't believe he should ever mind any-

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thing so much again. 'I'm not one of your sentimental sort,' he thought, half-congratulating himself, half in self-contempt. But he could not get her out of his head; he wondered if he ever should. And it had gone pretty far too. By Jove! that night in the orchard! — when she had kissed him, and thrown her arms round his neck! And then to write him that letter, when things were at their worst. She might have done the thing decently. Have treated a fellow kindly at least. Well, of course, it was all done with. Yes, it *was*. Done with!

He got up and began to pace his small room, his hands in his pockets, thinking of the night in the orchard. Then gradually the smart lessened, and his thoughts passed away to other things. That little Yankee girl had really made good sport all the way home. He had not been dull for a moment; she had teased and provoked him so. Her eyes, too, were wonderfully pretty, and her small, pointed chin, and her witch-like, imperious ways. Was it her money, the sense that she could do as she liked with most people, that made her so domineering and masterful? Very likely. On the journey he had put it down just to a natural and very surprising impudence. That was when he believed that she was a teacher, earning her bread. But the impudence had not prevented him from finding it much more amusing to talk to her than to anybody else.

And, on the whole, he thought she had not disliked him, though she had said the rudest things to him, and he had retaliated. She had asked him, indeed, to join them in an excursion the following day, and to tea at the Country Club. He had meant, if possible, to go

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back to New York on the morrow. But perhaps a day or two longer —

So she had a million — the little sprite? She was and would be a handful! — with a fortune or without it. And possessed also of the most extraordinary opinions. But he thought he would go on the excursion, and to the Country Club. He began to fold his mother's letter, and put it back into its envelope, while a slight flush mounted in his cheeks, and the young mouth that was still so boyish and candid took a stiffer line.

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CHAPTER III

'Is Miss Floyd at home?'

The questioner was Mrs. Verrier, who had just alighted from her carriage at the door of the house in Columbia Avenue inhabited by Miss Floyd and her chaperon.

The maid replied that Miss Floyd had not yet returned, but had left a message begging Mrs. Verrier to wait for her. The visitor was accordingly ushered to the drawing-room on the first floor.

This room, the staircase, the maid, all bore witness to Miss Floyd's simplicity — like the Romney dress of Mount Vernon. The colour of the walls and the hangings, the lines of the furniture, were all subdued, even a little austere. Quiet greens and blues, mingled with white, showed the artistic mind; the chairs and sofas were a trifle stiff and straight-legged; the electric fittings were of a Georgian plainness to match the Colonial architecture of the house; the beautiful self-coloured carpet was indeed Persian and costly, but it betrayed its costliness only to the expert. Altogether, the room, one would have said, of any *bourse moyenne*, with an eye for beauty. Fine photographs also, of Italian and Dutch pictures, suggested travel, and struck the cultivated cosmopolitan note.

Mrs. Verrier looked round it with a smile. It was all as unpretending as the maid who ushered her upstairs. Daphne would have no men-servants in her employ.

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What did two ladies want with them, in a democratic country? But Mrs. Verrier happened to know that Daphne's maid-servants were just as costly in their degree as the drawing-room carpet. Chosen for her in London with great care, attracted to Washington by enormous wages, these numerous damsels played their part in the general 'simplicity' effect; but on the whole Mrs. Verrier believed that Daphne's household was rather more expensive than that of other rich people who employed men.

She walked through the room, looking absently at the various photographs and engravings, till her attention was excited by an easel and a picture upon it in the back drawing-room. She went up to it with a muttered exclamation.

'So *she* bought it! Daphne's amazing!'

For what she saw before her was a masterpiece — an excessively costly masterpiece — of the Florentine school, smuggled out of Italy, to the wrath of the Italian Government, some six months before this date, and since then lost to general knowledge. Rumour had given it first to a well-known collection at Boston; then to another at Philadelphia; yet here it was in the possession of a girl of two-and-twenty of whom the great world was just — but only just — beginning to talk.

'How like Daphne!' thought her friend with malice. The 'simple' room, and the priceless picture carelessly placed in a corner of it, lest any one should really suppose that Daphne Floyd was an ordinary mortal.

Mrs. Verrier sat down at last in a chair fronting the picture and let herself fall into a reverie. On this occasion she was dressed in black. The lace strings of a hat

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crowned with black ostrich feathers were fastened under her chin by a diamond that sparkled in the dim greenish light of the drawing-room; the feathers of the hat were unusually large and drooping; they curled heavily round the thin neck and long, hollow-eyed face, so that its ivory whiteness, its fatigue, its fretful beauty were framed in and emphasised by them; her bloodless hands lay upon her lap, and the folds of the sweeping dress drawn round her showed her slenderness, or rather her emaciation. Two years before this date Madeleine Verrier had been a great beauty, and she had never yet reconciled herself to physical losses which were but the outward and visible sign of losses 'far more deeply interfused.' As she sat apparently absorbed in thought before the picture, she moved, half-consciously, so that she could no longer see herself in a mirror opposite.

Yet her thoughts were in truth much engaged with Daphne and Daphne's proceedings. It was now nearly three weeks since Roger Barnes had appeared on the horizon. General Hobson had twice postponed his departure for England, and was still 'enduring hardness' in a Washington hotel. Why his nephew should not be allowed to manage his courtship, if it was a courtship, for himself, Mrs. Verrier did not understand. There was no love lost between herself and the General, and she made much mock of him in her talks with Daphne. However, there he was; and she could only suppose that he took the situation seriously and felt bound to watch it in the interests of the young man's absent mother.

Was it serious? Certainly Daphne had been com-

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mitting herself a good deal. The question was whether she had not been committing herself more than the young man had been doing on his side. That was the astonishing part of it. Mrs. Verrier could not sufficiently admire the skill with which Roger Barnes had so far played his part; could not sufficiently ridicule her own lack of insight, which at her first meeting with him had pronounced him stupid. Stupid he might be in the sense that it was of no use to expect from him the kind of talk on books, pictures, and first principles which prevailed in Daphne's circle. But Mrs. Verrier thought she had seldom come across a finer sense of tactics than young Barnes had so far displayed in his dealings with Daphne. If he went on as he had begun, the probability was that he would succeed.

Did she, Madeleine Verrier, wish him to succeed?

Daphne had grown tragically necessary to her, in this world of American society — in that section of it, at any rate, in which she desired to move, where the widow of Leopold Verrier was always conscious of the blowing of a cold and hostile breath. She was not excluded, but she was not welcome; she was not ostracised, but she had lost consideration. There had been something picturesque and appealing in her husband; something unbearably tragic in the manner of his death. She had braved it out by staying in America, instead of losing herself in foreign towns; and she had thereby proclaimed that she had no guilty sense of responsibility, no burden on her conscience; that she had only behaved as a thousand other women would have behaved, and without any cruel intention at all. But she knew all the same that the spectators of what

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had happened held her for a cruel woman, and that there were many, and those the best, who saw her come with distaste and go without regret; and it was under that knowledge, in spite of indomitable pride, that her beauty had withered in a year.

And at the moment when the smart of what had happened to her — personally and socially — was at its keenest; when, after a series of quarrels, she had separated herself from the imperious mother who had been her evil genius throughout her marriage, she had made friends, unexpectedly, owing to a chance meeting at a picture-gallery, with Daphne Floyd. Some element in Daphne's nature had attracted and disarmed her. The proud, fastidious woman had given the girl her confidence — eagerly, indiscriminately. She had poured out upon her all that wild philosophy of 'rights' which is still struggling in the modern mind with a crumbling ethic and a vanishing religion. And she had found in Daphne a warm and passionate ally. Daphne was nothing if not 'advanced.' She shrank, as Roger Barnes had perceived, from no question; she had never been forbidden, had never forbidden herself, any book that she had a fancy to read; and she was as ready to discuss the relative divorce laws of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, as the girls of fifty years ago were to talk of the fashions, or 'Evangeline.' In any disputed case, moreover, between a man and a woman, Daphne was hotly and instinctively on the side of the woman. She had thrown herself, therefore, with ardour into the defence of Mrs. Verrier; and for her it was not the wife's desertion, but the husband's suicide which had been the cruel and indefensible thing. All these various

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traits and liberalisms had made her very dear to Madeleine Verrier.

Now, as that lady sat in her usual drooping attitude, wondering what Washington would be like for her when even Daphne Floyd was gone from it, the afternoon sun stole through the curtains of the window on the street and touched some of the furniture and engravings in the inner drawing-room. Suddenly Mrs. Verrier started in her chair. A face had emerged, thrown out upon the shadows by the sun-finger — the countenance of a handsome young Jew, as Rembrandt had once conceived it. Rare and high intelligence, melancholy, and premonition: — they were there embodied, so long as the apparition lasted.

The effect on Mrs. Verrier was apparently profound. She closed her eyes; her lips quivered; she leaned back feebly in her chair, breathing a name. The crisis lasted a few minutes, while the momentary vision faded and the sunlight crept on. The eyelids unclosed at last, slowly and painfully, as though shrinking from what might greet the eyes beneath them. But the farther wall was now in deep shade. Mrs. Verrier sat up; the emotion which had mastered her like a possession passed away; and rising hurriedly, she went back to the front drawing-room. She had hardly reached it when Miss Floyd's voice was heard upon the stairs.

Daphne entered the room in what appeared to be a fit of irritation. She was scolding the parlour-maid, whose high colour and dignified silence proclaimed her both blameless and long-suffering. At the sight of Mrs. Verrier, Daphne checked herself with an effort and kissed her friend rather absently.

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'Dear Madeleine! — very good of you to wait. Have they given you tea? I suppose not. My household seems to have gone mad this afternoon. Sit down. Some tea, Blount, at once.'

Mrs. Verrier sank into a corner of the sofa, while Daphne, with an 'ouf!' of fatigue, took off her hat, and threw herself down at the other end, her small feet curled up beneath her. Her half-frowning eyes gave the impression that she was still out of temper and on edge.

'Where have you been?' asked her companion quietly.

'Listening to a stuffy debate in the Senate,' said Daphne, without a smile.

'The Senate. What on earth took you there?'

'Well, why should n't I go? — why does one do anything? It was just a debate — horribly dull — trusts, or something of that kind. But there was a man attacking the President — and the place was crowded. Ugh! the heat was intolerable!'

'Who took you?'

Daphne named an under-secretary — an agreeable and ambitious man, who had been very much in her train during the preceding winter, and until Roger Barnes appeared upon the scene.

'I thought until I got your message that you were going to take Mr. Barnes motoring up the river.'

'Mr. Barnes was engaged.' Daphne gave the information tersely, rousing herself afterwards to make tea, which appeared at that moment.

'He seems to have been a good deal engaged this week,' said Mrs. Verrier, when they were alone again.

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Daphne made no reply.

And Mrs. Verrier, after observing her for a moment, resumed: 'I suppose it was the Bostonians?'

'I suppose so. What does it matter?' The tone was dry and sharp.

'Daphne, you goose!' laughed Mrs. Verrier, 'I believe this is the very first invitation of theirs he has accepted at all. He was written to about them by an old friend — his Eton master, or somebody of that sort. And as they turned up here on a visit, instead of his having to go and look for them at Boston, of course he had to call upon them.'

'I dare say. And of course he had to go to tea with them yesterday, and he had to take them to Arlington this afternoon! I suppose I'd better tell you — we had a quarrel on the subject last night.'

'Daphne! — don't, for heaven's sake, make him think himself too important!' cried Mrs. Verrier.

Daphne, with both elbows on the table, was slowly crunching a morsel of toast in her small white teeth. She had a look of concentrated energy — as of a person charged and overcharged with force of some kind, impatient to be let loose. Her black eyes sparkled; impetuosity and will shone from them; although they showed also rims of fatigue, as if Miss Daphne's nights had not of late been all they should be. Mrs. Verrier was chiefly struck, however, by the perception that for the first time Daphne was not having altogether her own way with the world. Madeleine had not observed anything of the same kind in her before. In general she was in entire command both of herself and of the men who surrounded her. She made a little court

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out of them, and treated them *en despote*. But Roger Barnes had not lent himself to the process; he had not played the game properly; and Daphne's sleep had been disturbed for the first time in history.

It had been admitted very soon between the two friends — without putting it very precisely — that Daphne was interested in Roger Barnes. Mrs. Verrier believed that the girl had been originally carried off her feet by the young man's superb good looks, and by the natural distinction — evident in all societies — which they conferred upon him. Then, no doubt, she had been piqued by his good-humoured, easy way — the absence of any doubt of himself, of tremor, of insistence. Mrs. Verrier said to herself — not altogether shrewdly — that he had no nerves, or no heart; and Daphne had not yet come across the genus. Her lovers had either possessed too much heart — like Captain Boyson — or a lack of coolness, when it really came to the point of grappling with Daphne and her millions, as in the case of a dozen she could name. Whereby it had come about that Daphne's attention had been first provoked, then peremptorily seized by the Englishman; and Mrs. Verrier began now to suspect that deeper things were really involved.

Certainly there was a good deal to puzzle the spectator. That the English are a fortune-hunting race may be a popular axiom; but it was quite possible, after all, that Roger Barnes was not the latest illustration of it. It was quite possible, also, that he had a sweetheart at home, some quiet, Quakerish girl who would never wave in his face the red flags that Daphne was fond of brandishing. It was equally possible that he was

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merely fooling with Daphne — that he had seen girls he liked better in New York, and was simply killing time till a sportsman friend of whom he talked should appear on the scene and take him off to shoot moose and catch trout in the Province of Quebec. Mrs. Verrier realised that, for all his lack of subtlety and the higher conversation, young Barnes had managed astonishingly to keep his counsel. His 'simplicity,' like Daphne's, seemed to be of a special type.

And yet —there was no doubt that he had devoted himself a great deal. Washington society had quickly found him out; he had been invited to all the most fastidious houses, and was immensely in request for picnics and expeditions. But he had contrived, on the whole, to make all these opportunities promote the flirtation with Daphne. He had, in fact, been enough at her beck and call to make her the envy of a young society with whom the splendid Englishman promised to become the rage, and not enough to silence or wholly discourage other claimants on his time.

This no doubt accounted for the fact that the two charming Bostonians, Mrs. Maddison and her daughter, who had but lately arrived in Washington and made acquaintance with Roger Barnes, were still evidently in ignorance of what was going on. They were not initiated. They had invited young Barnes in the innocence of their hearts, without inviting Daphne Floyd, whom they did not previously know. And the young man had seen fit to accept their invitation. Hence the jealousy that was clearly burning in Daphne, that she was not indeed even trying to hide from the shrewd eyes of her friend.

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Mrs. Verrier's advice not to make Roger Barnes 'too important' had called up a flash of colour in the girl's cheeks. But she did not resent it in words; rather her silence deepened, till Mrs. Verrier stretched out a hand and laughingly turned the small face towards her that she might see what was in it.

'Daphne! I really believe you're in love with him!'

'Not at all,' said Daphne, her eyelids flickering; 'I never know what to talk to him about.'

'As if that mattered!'

'Elsie Maddison always knows what to talk to him about, and he chatters to her the whole time.'

Mrs. Verrier paused a moment, then said: 'Do you suppose he came to America to marry money?'

'I have n't an idea.'

'Do you suppose he knows that you — are not exactly a pauper?'

Daphne drew herself away impatiently. 'I really don't suppose anything, Madeleine. He never talks about money, and I should think he had plenty himself.'

Mrs. Verrier replied by giving an outline of the financial misfortunes of Mr. Barnes *père*, as they had been described to her by another English traveller in Washington.

Daphne listened indifferently. 'He can't be very poor or he would n't behave as he does. And he is to inherit the General's property. He told me so.'

'And it would n't matter to you, Daphne, if you did think a man had married you for money?'

Daphne had risen, and was pacing the drawing-

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room floor, her hands clasped behind her back. She turned a cloudy face upon her questioner. 'It would matter a great deal, if I thought it had been only for money. But then, I hope I should n't have been such a fool as to marry him.'

'But you could bear it, if the money counted for something?'

'I'm not an idiot!' said the girl, with energy. 'With whom does n't money count for something? Of course a man must take money into consideration.' There was a curious touch of arrogance in the gesture which accompanied the words.

'"How pleasant it is to have money, heigh-ho! — How pleasant it is to have money,"' said Mrs. Verrier, quoting, with a laugh. 'Yes, I dare say, you'd be very reasonable, Daphne, about that kind of thing. But I don't think you'd be a comfortable wife, dear, all the same.'

'What do you mean?'

'You might allow your husband to spare a little love to your money; you would be for killing him if he ever looked at another woman!'

'You mean I should be jealous?' asked Daphne, almost with violence. 'You are quite right there. I should be very jealous. On that point I should "find quarrel in a straw."'

Her cheeks had flushed a passionate red. The eyes which she had inherited from her Spanish grandmother blazed above them. She had become suddenly a woman of Andalusia and the South, moved by certain primitive forces in the blood.

Madeleine Verrier held out her hands, smiling.

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'Come here, little wild cat. I believe you are jealous of Elsie Maddison.'

Daphne approached her slowly, and slowly dropped into a seat beside her friend, her eyes still fixed and splendid. But as she looked into them Madeleine Verrier saw them suddenly dimmed.

'Daphne! you *are* in love with him!'

The girl recovered herself, clenching her small hands. 'If I am,' she said resolutely, 'it is strange how like the other thing it is! I don't know whether I shall speak to him to-night.'

'To-night?' Mrs. Verrier looked a little puzzled.

'At the White House. You're going, of course.'

'No, I am not going.' The voice was quiet and cold. 'I am not asked.'

Daphne, vexed with herself, touched her friend's hand caressingly. 'It will be just a crush, dear. But I promised various people to go.'

'And he will be there?'

'I suppose so.' Daphne turned her head away, and then sprang up. 'Have you seen the picture?'

Mrs. Verrier followed her into the inner room, where the girl gave a laughing and triumphant account of her acquisition, the agents she had employed, the skill with which it had been conveyed out of Italy, the wrath of various famous collectors, who had imagined that the fight lay between them alone, when they found the prize had been ravished from them. Madeleine Verrier was very intelligent, and the contrast, which the story brought out, between the girl's fragile youth and the strange and passionate sense of power which breathed from her whenever it became a question of wealth and

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the use of it, was at no point lost upon her companion.

Daphne would not allow any further talk of Roger Barnes. Her chaperon, Mrs. Phillips, presently appeared, and passed through rather a bad quarter of an hour while the imperious mistress of the house inquired into certain invitations and card-leavings that had not been managed to her liking. Then Daphne sat down to write a letter to a Girls' Club in New York, of which she was President — where, in fact, she occasionally took the Singing Class, with which she had made so much play at her first meeting with Roger Barnes. She had to tell them that she had just engaged a holiday house for them, to which they might go in instalments throughout the summer. She would pay the rent, provide a lady-superintendent, and make herself responsible for all but food expenses. Her small face relaxed — became quite soft and charming — as she wrote.

'But, my dear,' cried Mrs. Phillips in dismay, as Daphne handed her the letter to read, 'you have taken the house on Lake George, and you know the girls had all set their hearts on that place in the White Mountains!'

Daphne's lips tightened. 'Certainly I have taken the house on Lake George,' she said, as she carefully wiped her pen. 'I told them I should.'

'But, my dear, they are so tired of Lake George! They have been there three years running. And you know they subscribe a good deal themselves.'

'Very well! — then let them do without my help. I have inquired into the matter. The house on Lake George is much more suitable than the White Moun-

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tains farm, and I have written to the agent. The thing's done.'

Mrs. Phillips argued a little more, but Daphne was immoveable.

Mrs. Verrier, watching the two, reflected, as she had often done before, that Mrs. Phillips's post was not particularly enviable. Daphne treated her in many ways with great generosity, paid her highly, grudged her no luxury, and was always courteous to her in public. But in private Daphne's will was law, and she had an abrupt and dictatorial way of asserting it that brought the red back into Mrs. Phillips's faded cheeks. Mrs. Verrier had often expected her to throw up her post. But there was no doubt something in Daphne's personality which made life beside her too full of colour to be lightly abandoned.

Daphne presently went upstairs to take off her walking-dress, and Mrs. Phillips, with a rather troubled face, began to tidy the confusion of letters she had left behind her.

'I dare say the girls won't mind,' said Madeleine Verrier, kindly.

Mrs. Phillips started, and her mild lips quivered a little. Daphne's charities were for Daphne an amusement; for this gentle, faded woman, who bore all the drudgery of them, they were the chief attraction of life in Daphne's house. Mrs. Phillips loved the club-girls, and the thought of their disappointment pained her.

'I must try and put it to them,' was her patient reply.

'Daphne must always have her way,' Madeleine

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went on, smiling. 'I wonder what she'll do when she marries.'

Mrs. Phillips looked up quickly.

'I hope it'll be the right man, Mrs. Verrier. Of course, with any one so — so clever — and so used to managing everything for herself — one would be a little anxious.'

Mrs. Verrier's expression changed. A kind of wildness — fanaticism — invaded it, as of one recalling a mission. 'Oh, well, nothing is irrevocable nowadays,' she said, almost with violence. 'Still I hope Daphne won't make a mistake.'

Mrs. Phillips looked at her companion, at first in astonishment. Then a change passed over her face. With a cold excuse she left Mrs. Verrier alone.

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CHAPTER IV

THE reception at the White House was being given in honour of the delegates to a Peace Congress. The rooms were full without being inconveniently crowded and the charming house opened its friendly doors to a society more congruous and organic, richer also in the nobler kind of variety than America, perhaps, can offer to her guests elsewhere. What the opera and international finance are to New York, politics and administration are, as we all know, to Washington. And the visitor from Europe, conversationally starved for want of what seem to him the only topics worth discussing, finds himself within hearing once more of ministers, cabinets, embassies, and parliamentary gossip. Even General Hobson had come to admit that — especially for the middle-aged — Washington parties were extremely agreeable. The young and foolish might sigh for the flesh-pots of New York; those on whom 'the black ox had trodden,' who were at all aware what a vast tormenting, multitudinous, and headstrong world man has been given to inhabit; those who were engaged in governing any part of that world, or meant some day to be thus engaged; for them Washington was indispensable, and New York a mere entertainment.

Moreover Washington, at this time of the world's history, was the scene of one of those episodes — those brisker moments in the human comedy — which every

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now and then revive among us an almost forgotten belief in personality, an almost forgotten respect for the mysteries behind it. The guests streaming through the White House defiled past a man who, in a level and docketed world, appeared to his generation as the reincarnation of forces primitive, over-mastering, and heroic. An honest Odysseus! — toil-worn and storm-beaten, yet still with the spirit and strength, the many devices, of a boy; capable like his prototype in one short day of crushing his enemies, upholding his friends, purifying his house; and then, with the heat of righteous battle still upon him, with its gore, so to speak, still upon his hands, of turning his mind, without a pause and without hypocrisy, to things intimate and soft and pure — the domestic sweetness of Penelope, the young promise of Telemachus. The President stood, a rugged figure, amid the cosmopolitan crowd, breasting the modern world, like some ocean headland, yet not truly of it, one of the great fighters and workers of mankind, with a laugh that pealed above the noise, blue eyes that seemed to pursue some converse of their own, and a hand that grasped and cheered, where other hands withdrew and repelled. This one man's will had now, for some years, made the pivot on which vast issues turned — issues of peace and war, of policy embracing the civilised world; and, here, one saw him in drawing-rooms, discussing Alaric's campaigns with an Oxford professor, or chatting with a young mother about her children.

Beside him, the human waves, as they met and parted, disclosed a woman's face, modelled by nature in one of her lightest and deftest moods, a trifle de-

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The White House, Washington, D. C.

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tached, humorous also, as though the world's strange sights stirred a gentle and kindly mirth behind its sweet composure. The dignity of the President's wife was complete, yet it had not extinguished the personality it clothed; and where royalty, as the European knows it, would have donned its mask and stood on its defence, Republican royalty dared to be its amused, confiding, natural self.

All around — the political, diplomatic world of Washington. General Hobson, as he passed through it, greeted by what was now a large acquaintance, found himself driven once more to the inward confession — the grudging confession — as though Providence had not played him fair in extorting it — that American politicians were of a vastly finer stamp than he had expected to find them. The American press was all — he vowed — that fancy had painted it, and more. But, as he looked about him at the members of the President's administration — at this tall, black-haired man, for instance, with the mild and meditative eye, the equal, social or intellectual, of any Foreign Minister that Europe might pit against him, or any diplomat that might be sent to handle him; or this younger man, sparely built, with the sane, handsome face — son of a famous father, modest, amiable, efficient; or this other, of huge bulk and height, the sport of caricature, the hope of a party, smiling already a presidential smile as he passed, observed and beset, through the crowded rooms; or these naval or military men, with their hard serviceable looks, and the curt good manners of their kind: — the General saw as clearly as anybody else, that America need make no excuses whatever for her

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best men, that she has evolved the leaders she wants, and Europe has nothing to teach them.

He could only console himself by the remembrance of a speech, made by a well-known man, at a military function which the General had attended as a guest of honour the day before. There at last was the real thing! The real, Yankee, spread-eagle thing! The General positively hugged the thought of it.

'The American soldier,' said the speaker, standing among the ambassadors, the naval and military *attachés*, of all the European nations, 'is the superior of all other soldiers in three respects — bravery, discipline, intelligence.'

Bravery, discipline, intelligence! Just those — the merest trifle! The General had found himself chuckling over it in the visions of the night.

Tired at last of these various impressions, acting on a mind not quite alert enough to deal with them, the General went in search of his nephew. Roger had been absent all day, and the General had left the hotel before his return. But the uncle was sure that he would sooner or later put in an appearance.

It was of course entirely on Roger's account that this unwilling guest of America was her guest still. For three weeks now had the General been watching the affair between Roger and Daphne Floyd. It had gone with such a rush at first, such a swing and fervour, that the General had felt that any day might bring the *dénouement*. It was really impossible to desert the lad at such a crisis, especially as Laura was so excitable and anxious, and so sure to make her brother pay for it if he failed to support her views and ambitions at the

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right moment. The General moreover felt the absolute necessity of getting to know something more about Miss Floyd, her character, the details of her fortune and antecedents, so that when the great moment came he might be prepared.

But the astonishing thing was that of late the whole affair seemed to have come to some stupid hitch! Roger had been behaving like a very cool hand — too cool by half in the General's opinion. What the deuce did he mean by hanging about these Boston ladies, if his affections were really fixed on Miss Daphne? — or his ambitions, which to the uncle seemed nearer the truth.

'Well, where is the nephew?' said Cecilia Boyson's voice in his ear.

The General turned. He saw a sharp, though still young face, a thin and willowy figure, attired in white silk, a *pince-nez* on the high-pitched nose, and a cool smile. Unconsciously his back stiffened. Miss Boyson invariably roused in him a certain masculine antagonism.

'I should be glad if you would tell me,' he said, with some formality. 'There are two or three people here to whom he should be introduced.'

'Has he been picnicking with the Maddisons?' The voice was shrill, perhaps malicious.

'I believe they took him to Arlington, and somewhere else afterwards.'

'Ah,' said Cecilia, 'there they are.'

The General looked towards the door and saw his nephew enter, behind a mother and daughter whom, as it seemed to him, their acquaintances in the crowd

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around them greeted with a peculiar cordiality; the mother, still young, with a stag-like carriage of the head, a long throat, swathed in white tulle, and grizzled hair, on which shone a spray of diamonds; the daughter, equally tall and straight, repeating her mother's beauty with a bloom and radiance of her own. Innocent and happy, with dark eyes and a soft mouth, Miss Maddison dropped a little curtsey to the presidential pair, and the room turned to look at her as she did so.

'A very sweet-looking girl,' said the General warmly. 'Her father is, I think, a professor.'

'He was. He is now just a writer of books. But Elsie was brought up in Cambridge. How did Mr. Roger know them?'

'His Eton tutor told him to go and see them.'

'I thought Miss Floyd expected him to-day?' said Miss Boyson carelessly, adjusting her eyeglass.

'It was a mistake, a misunderstanding,' replied the General hurriedly. 'Miss Floyd's party is put off till next week.'

'Daphne is just coming in,' said Miss Boyson.

The General turned again. The watchful Cecilia was certain that *he* was not in love with Daphne. But the nephew — the inordinately handsome, and by now much-courted young man — what was the real truth about him?

Cecilia recognised — with Mrs. Verrier — that merely to put the question involved a certain tribute to young Barnes. He had at any rate done his fortune-hunting, if fortune-hunting it were, with decorum.

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'Miss Floyd is looking well to-night,' remarked the General.

Cecilia did not reply. She and a great part of the room were engaged in watching Roger Barnes and Miss Maddison walking together through a space which seemed to have been cleared on purpose for them, but was really the result of a move towards the supper-room.

'Was there ever such a pair?' said an enthusiastic voice behind the General. 'Athene and Apollo take the floor!' A grey-haired journalist with a small, bewrinkled face, buried in whiskers, and beard, laid a hand on the General's arm as he spoke.

The General smiled vaguely. 'Do you know Mrs. and Miss Maddison?'

'Rather!' said the little man. 'Miss Elsie's a wonder. As pretty and soft as they make them, and a Greek scholar besides — took all sorts of honours at Radcliffe last year. I've known her from her cradle.'

'What a number of your girls go to college!' said the General, but ungraciously, in the tones of one who no sooner saw an American custom emerging than his instinct was to hit it.

'Yes; it's a feature of our modern life — the life of our women. But not the most significant one, by a long way.'

The General could not help a look of inquiry.

The journalist's face changed from gay to grave. 'The most significant thing in American life just now —'

'I know!' interrupted the General. 'Your divorce laws!'

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The journalist shook his head. 'It goes deeper than that. What we're looking on at is a complete transformation of the idea of marriage —'

A movement in the crowd bore the speaker away. The General was left watching the beautiful pair in the distance. They were apparently quite unconscious that they roused any special attention. Laughing and chatting like two children, they passed into the supper-room and disappeared.

Ten minutes later, in the supper-room, Barnes deserted the two ladies with whom he had entered, and went in pursuit of a girl in white, whose necklace of star sapphires, set in a Spanish setting of the seventeenth century, had at once caught the eye of the judicious. Roger, however, knew nothing of jewels, and was only conscious as he approached Miss Floyd, first of the mingling in his own mind of something like embarrassment with something like defiance, and then, of the glitter in the girl's dark eyes.

'I hope you had an interesting debate,' he said. 'Mrs. Phillips tells me you went to the Senate.'

Daphne looked him up and down. 'Did I?' she said slowly. 'I've forgotten. Will you move, please? There's some one bringing me an ice.' And turning her back on Roger, she smiled and beckoned to the Under-Secretary, who with a triumphant face was making his way to her through the crowd.

Roger coloured hotly. 'May I bring Mrs. Maddison?' he said, passing her; 'she would like to talk to you about a party for next week —'

'Thank you. I am just going home.' And with an energetic movement she freed herself from him, and

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was soon in the gayest of talk with the Under-Secretary.

The reception broke up some time after midnight, and on the way home General Hobson attempted a raid upon his nephew's intentions.

'I don't wish to seem an intrusive person, my dear Roger, but may I ask how much longer you mean to stay in Washington?'

The tone was short and the look which accompanied the words not without sarcasm. Roger, who had been walking beside his companion, still deeply flushed, in complete silence, gave an awkward laugh.

'And as for you, Uncle Archie, I thought you meant to sail a fortnight ago. If you've been staying on like this on my account —'

'Don't make a fool either of me or yourself, Roger!' said the General hastily, roused at last to speech by the annoyance of the situation. 'Of course it was on your account that I have stayed on. But what on earth it all means, and where your affairs are — I'm hanged if I have the glimmer of an idea!'

Roger's smile was perfectly good-humoured.

'I have n't much myself,' he said quietly.

'Do you — or do you not — mean to propose to Miss Floyd?' cried the General, pausing in the centre of Lafayette Square, now all but deserted, and apostrophising with his umbrella — for the night was soft and rainy — the presidential statue above his head.

'Have I given you reason to suppose that I was going to do so?' said Roger slowly.

'Given me? — given everybody reason? — of course

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you have! — a dozen times over. I don't like interfering with your affairs, Roger — with any young man's affairs — but you must know that you have set Washington talking, and it's not fair to the girl — by George it is n't! — when she has given you encouragement and you have made her conspicuous, to begin the same story, in the same place, immediately, with some one else! As you say, I ought to have taken myself off long ago.'

'I did n't say anything of the kind,' said Roger hotly; 'you should n't put words into my mouth, Uncle Archie. And I really don't see why you attack me like this. My tutor particularly asked me, if I came across them, to be civil to Mrs. Maddison and her daughter, and I have done nothing but pay them the most ordinary attentions.'

'When a man is in love he pays no ordinary attentions. He has eyes for no one but the lady.' The General's umbrella, as it descended from the face of Andrew Jackson and rattled on the flagged path, supplied each word with emphasis. 'However, it is no good talking, and I don't exactly know why I should put my old oar in. But the fact is I feel a certain responsibility. People here have been uncommonly civil. Well, well! — I've wired to-day to ask if there is a berth left in the *Venetia* for Saturday. And you, I suppose' — the inquiry was somewhat peremptory — 'will be going back to New York?'

'I have no intention of leaving Washington just yet,' said Roger, with decision.

'And may I ask what you intend to do here?'

Roger laughed. 'I really think that's my business.

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However, you've been an awful brick, Uncle Archie, to stay on like this. I assure you, if I don't say much, I think it.'

By this time they had reached the hotel, the steps and hall of which were full of people.

'That's how you put me off.' The General's tone was resentful. 'And you won't give me any idea of the line I am to take with your mother?'

The young man smiled again and waved an evasive hand.

'If you'll only be patient a little longer, Uncle Archie —'

At this point an acquaintance of the General's who was smoking in the hall came forward to greet him, and Roger made his escape.

'Well, what the deuce *do* I mean to do?' Barnes asked himself the question deliberately. He was hanging out of the window, in his bedroom, smoking and pondering.

It was a mild and rainy night. Washington was full of the earth and leaf odours of the spring, which rose in gusts from its trees and gardens; and rugged, swiftly moving clouds disclosed every now and then what looked like hurrying stars.

The young man was excited and on edge. Daphne Floyd — and the thought of Daphne Floyd — had set his pulses hammering; they challenged in him the aggressive, self-assertive, masculine force. The history of the preceding three weeks was far from simple. He had first paid a determined court to her, conducting it in an orthodox, English, conspicuous way. His mother, and

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her necessities — his own also — imposed it on him; and he flung himself into it, setting his teeth. Then, to his astonishment, one may almost say to his disconcerting, he found the prey all at once, and, as it were, without a struggle, fluttering to his lure, and practically within his grasp. There was an evening when Daphne's sudden softness, the look in her eyes, the inflexion in her voice had fairly thrown him off his balance. For the first time he had shown a lack of self-command and self-possession. Whereupon, in a flash, a new and strange Daphne had developed — imperious, difficult, incalculable. The more he gave, the more she claimed. Nor was it mere girlish caprice. The young Englishman, invited to a game that he had never yet played, felt in it something sinister and bewildering. Gropingly, he divined in front of him a future of tyranny on her side, of expected submission on his. The Northern character in him, with its reserve, its phlegm, its general sanity, began to shrink from the Southern elements in her. He became aware of the depths in her nature, of things volcanic and primitive, and the English stuff in him recoiled.

So he was to be bitted and bridled, it seemed, in the future. Daphne Floyd would have bought him with her dollars, and he would have to pay the price.

Something natural and wild in him said No! If he married this girl he would be master, in spite of her money. He realised vaguely, at any rate, the strength of her will, and the way in which it had been tempered and steeled by circumstance. But the perception only roused in himself some slumbering tenacities and vehemences of which he had been scarcely aware. So that,

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almost immediately — since there was no glamour of passion on his side — he began to resent her small tyrannies, to draw in, and draw back. A few quarrels — not ordinary lovers' quarrels, but representing a true grapple of personalities — sprang up behind a screen of trifles. Daphne was once more rude and provoking, Roger cool and apparently indifferent. This was the stage when Mrs. Verrier had become an admiring observer of what she supposed to be his 'tactics.' But she knew nothing of the curious little crisis which had preceded them.

Then the Maddisons, mother and daughter, 'my tutor's friends,' had appeared upon the scene — charming people! Of course civilities were due to them, and had to be paid them. Next to his mother — and to the girl of the orchard — the affections of this youth, who was morally backward and immature, but neither callous nor fundamentally selfish, had been chiefly given to a certain Eton master, of a type happily not uncommon in English public schools. Herbert French had been Roger's earliest and best friend. What Roger had owed him at school, only he knew. Since school-days they had been constant correspondents, and French's influence on his pupil's early manhood had done much, for all Roger's laziness and self-indulgence, to keep him from serious lapses.

Neglect any friends of his — and such jolly friends? Rather not! But as soon as Daphne had seen Elsie Maddison, and he had begged an afternoon to go on an expedition with them, Daphne had become intolerable. She had shown her English friend and his acquaintances

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a manner so insulting and provocative, that the young man's blood had boiled.

If he were in love with her — well and good! She might no doubt have tamed him by these stripes. But she was no goddess to him; no golden cloud enveloped her; he saw her under a common daylight. At the same time she attracted him; he was vain of what had seemed his conquest, and uneasily exultant in the thought of her immense fortune. 'I'll make her an excellent husband if she marries me,' he said to himself stubbornly; 'I can, and I will.'

But meanwhile how was this first stage to end? At the White House that night Daphne had treated him with contumely, and before spectators. He must either go or bring her to the point.

He withdrew suddenly from the window, flinging out the end of his cigarette. 'I'll propose to her tomorrow — and she may either take me or leave me!'

He paced up and down his room, conscious of relief and fresh energy. As he did so his eyes were drawn to a letter from Herbert French lying on the table. He took it up and read it again — smiling over it broadly, in a boyish and kindly amusement. 'By Jove! he's happy.'

Then as he put it down his face darkened. There was something in the letter, in its manliness and humour, its unconscious revelation of ideals wholly independent of dollars, that made Roger for the moment loathe his own position. But he pulled himself together.

'I shall make her a good husband,' he repeated, frowning. 'She'll have nothing to complain of.'

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On the following day a picnic among the woods of the Upper Potomac brought together most of the personages in this history. The day was beautiful, the woods fragrant with spring leaf and blossom, and the stream, swollen with rain, ran seaward in a turbid, rejoicing strength.

The General, having secured his passage home, was in good spirits as far as his own affairs were concerned, though still irritable on the score of his nephew's. Since the abortive attempt on his confidence of the night before, Roger had avoided all private conversation with his uncle; and for once the old had to learn patience from the young.

The party was given by the wife of one of the staff of the French Embassy — a young Frenchwoman, as gay and frank as her babies, and possessed, none the less, of all the social arts of her nation. She had taken a shrewd interest in the matter of Daphne Floyd and the Englishman. Daphne, according to her, should be promptly married and her millions taken care of, and the handsome, broad-shouldered fellow impressed the little Frenchwoman's imagination as a proper and capable watchdog. She had indeed become aware that something was wrong, but her acuteness entirely refused to believe that it had any vital connection with the advent of pretty Elsie Maddison. Meanwhile, to please Daphne, whom she liked, while conscious of a strong and frequent desire to smite her, Madame de Fronsac had invited Mrs. Verrier, treating her with a cold and punctilious courtesy that, as applied to any other guest, would have seemed an affront.

In vain, however, did the hostess, in vain did other

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kindly bystanders, endeavour to play the game of Daphne Floyd. In the first place Daphne herself, though piped unto, refused to dance. She avoided the society of Roger Barnes in a pointed and public way, bright colour on her cheeks and a wild light in her eyes; the Under-Secretary escorted her and carried her wrap. Washington did not know what to think. For owing to this conduct of Daphne's, the charming Boston girl, the other *ingénue* of the party, fell constantly to the care of young Barnes; and to see them stepping along the green ways together, matched almost in height, and clearly of the same English ancestry and race, pleased while it puzzled the spectators.

The party lunched in a little inn beside the river, and then scattered again along woodland paths. Daphne and the Under-Secretary wandered on ahead and were some distance from the rest of the party when that gentleman suddenly looked at his watch in dismay. An appointment had to be kept with the President at a certain hour, and the Under-Secretary's wits had been wandering. There was nothing for it but to take a short cut through the woods to a local station and make at once for Washington.

Daphne quickened his uneasiness and hastened his departure. She assured him that the others were close behind, and that nothing could suit her better than to rest on a mossy stone that happily presented itself till they arrived.

The Under-Secretary, transformed into the anxious and ambitious politician, abruptly left her.

Daphne, as soon as he was gone, allowed herself the natural attitude that fitted her thoughts. She was

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furiously in love and torn with jealousy; and that love and jealousy could smart so, and cling so, was a strange revelation to one accustomed to make a world entirely to her liking. Her dark eyes were hollow, her small mouth had lost its colour, and she showed that touch of something wasting and withering that Theocritan shepherds knew in old Sicilian days. It was as though she had defied a god — and the god had avenged himself.

Suddenly he appeared — the teasing divinity — in human shape. There was a rustling among the brushwood fringing the river. Roger Barnes emerged and made his way up towards her.

'I've been stalking you all this time,' he said, breathless, as he reached her, 'and now at last — I've caught you!'

Daphne rose furiously. 'What right have you to stalk me, as you call it — to follow me — to speak to me even? I wish to avoid you — and I have shown it!'

Roger looked at her. He had thrown down his hat, and she saw him against the background of sunny wood, as the magnificent embodiment of its youth and force. 'And why have you shown it?' There was a warning tremor of excitement in his voice. 'What have I done? I have n't deserved it! You treat me like — like a friend! — and then you drop me like a hot coal. You 've been awfully unkind to me!'

'I won't discuss it with you,' she cried passionately. 'You are in my way, Mr. Barnes. Let me go back to the others!' And stretching out a small hand, she tried to put him aside.

Roger hesitated, but only for a moment. He caught

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the hand, he gathered its owner into a pair of strong arms, and bending over her, he kissed her. Daphne, suffocated with anger and emotion, broke from him — tottering. Then sinking on the ground beneath a tree, she burst into sobbing. Roger, scarlet, with sparkling eyes, dropped on one knee beside her.

'Daphne, I'm a ruffian! forgive me! you must, Daphne! Look here, I want you to marry me. I've nothing to offer you, of course; I'm a poor man, and you've all this horrible money! But I — I love you! — and I'll make you a good husband, Daphne, that I'll swear. If you'll take me, you shall never be sorry for it.'

He looked at her again, sorely embarrassed, hating himself, yet inwardly sure of her. Her small frame shook with weeping. And presently she turned from him and said in a fierce voice:

'Go and tell all that to Elsie Maddison!'

Infinitely relieved, Roger gave a quick, excited laugh.

'She'd soon send me about my business! I should be a day too late for the fair, in *that* quarter. What do you think she and I have been talking about all this time, Daphne?'

'I don't care,' said Daphne hastily, with face still averted.

'I'm going to tell you, all the same,' cried Roger triumphantly, and diving into his coat pocket he produced 'my tutor's' letter. Daphne sat immoveable, and he had to read it aloud himself. It contained the rapturous account of Herbert French's engagement to Miss Maddison, a happy event which had taken place

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in England during the Eton holidays, about a month before this date.

'There!' cried the young man as he finished it. 'And she's talked about nothing all the time, nothing at all — but old Herbert — and how good he is — and how good-looking, and the Lord knows what! I got precious sick of it, though I think he 's a trump, too. Oh, Daphne! — you were a little fool!'

'All the same, you have behaved abominably!' Daphne said, still choking.

'No, I have n't,' was Roger's firm reply. 'It was you who were so cross. I could n't tell you anything. I say! you do know how to stick pins into people!'

But he took up her hand and kissed it as he spoke.

Daphne allowed it. Her breast heaved as the storm departed. And she looked so charming, so soft, so desirable, as she sat there in her white dress, with her great tear-washed eyes and fluttering breath, that the youth was really touched and carried off his feet; and the rest of his task was quite easy. All the familiar things that had to be said were said, and with all the proper emphasis and spirit. He played his part, the spring woods played theirs, and Daphne, worn out by emotion and conquered by passion, gradually betrayed herself wholly. And so much at least may be said to the man's credit that there were certainly moments in the half-hour between them when, amid the rush of talk, laughter, and caresses, that conscience which he owed so greatly to the exertions of 'my tutor' pricked him not a little.

After losing themselves deliberately in the woods, they strolled back to join the rest of the party. The

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sounds of conversation were already audible through the trees in front of them, when they saw Mrs. Verrier coming towards them. She was walking alone and did not perceive them. Her eyes were raised and fixed, as though on some sight in front of them. The bitterness, the anguish, one might almost call it, of her expression, the horror in the eyes, as of one ghost-led, ghost-driven, drew an exclamation from Roger.

'There 's Mrs. Verrier! Why, how ill she looks!'

Daphne paused, gazed, and shrank. She drew him aside through the trees.

'Let's go another way. Madeleine's often strange.' And with a superstitious pang she wished that Madeleine Verrier's face had not been the first to meet her in this hour of her betrothal.

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PART II

THREE YEARS AFTER

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CHAPTER V

In the drawing-room at Heston Park two ladies were seated. One was a well-preserved woman of fifty, with a large oblong face, good features, a double chin, and abundant grey hair arranged in waved *bandeaux* above a forehead which should certainly have implied strength of character, and a pair of challenging black eyes. Lady Barnes moved and spoke with authority; it was evident that she had been accustomed to do so all her life; to trail silk gowns over Persian carpets, to engage expensive cooks and rely on expensive butlers, with a strict attention to small economies all the time; to impose her will on her household and the clergyman of the parish; to give her opinions on books, and expect them to be listened to; to abstain from politics as unfeminine, and to make up for it by the strongest of views on Church questions. She belonged to an English type common throughout all classes — quite harmless and tolerable when things go well, but apt to be soured and twisted by adversity.

And Lady Barnes, it will be remembered, had known adversity. Not much of it, nor for long together; but in her own opinion she had gone through 'great trials,' to the profit of her Christian character. She was quite certain, now, that everything had been for the best, and that Providence makes no mistakes. But that, perhaps, was because the 'trials' had only lasted about a year; and then, so far as they were pecuniary, the

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marriage of her son with Miss Daphne Floyd had entirely relieved her of them. For Roger now made her a handsome allowance and the chastened habits of a most uncomfortable year had been hastily abandoned.

Nevertheless, Lady Barnes's aspect on this autumn afternoon was not cheerful, and her companion was endeavouring, with a little kind embarrassment, both to soothe an evident irritation and to avoid the confidences that Roger's mother seemed eager to pour out. Elsie French, whom Washington had known three years before as Elsie Maddison, was in that bloom of young married life when all that was lovely in the girl seems to be still lingering, while yet love and motherhood have wrought once more their old transforming miracle on sense and spirit. In her afternoon dress of dainty sprigged silk, with just a touch of austerity in the broad muslin collar and cuffs — her curly brown hair simply parted on her brow, and gathered classically on a shapely head — her mouth a little troubled, her brow a little puckered over Lady Barnes's discontents — she was a very gracious vision. Yet behind the gentleness, as even Lady Barnes knew, there were qualities and characteristics of a singular strength.

Lady Barnes indeed was complaining, and could not be stopped.

'You see, dear Mrs. French,' she was saying, in a rapid, lowered voice, and with many glances at the door, 'the trouble is that Daphne is never satisfied. She has some impossible ideal in her mind, and then everything must be sacrificed to it. She began with going into ecstasies over this dear old house, and now! — there's scarcely a thing in it she does not want to

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change. Poor Edward and I spent thousands upon it, and we really flattered ourselves that we had some taste; but it is not good enough for Daphne!'

The speaker settled herself in her chair with a slight but emphatic clatter of bangles and rustle of skirts.

'It's the ceilings, isn't it?' murmured Elsie French, glancing at the heavy decoration, the stucco bosses and pendants above her head which had replaced, some twenty years before, a piece of Adam design, sparing and felicitous.

'It's everything!' Lady Barnes's tone was now more angry than fretful. 'I don't, of course, like to say it — but really Daphne's self-confidence is too amazing!'

'She does know so much,' said Elsie French reflectively. 'Does n't she?'

'Well, if you call it knowing. She can always get some tiresome person, whom she calls an "expert," to back her up. But I believe in liking what you *do* like, and not being bullied into what you don't like.'

'I suppose if one studies these things — ' Elsie French began timidly.

'What's the good of studying!' cried Lady Barnes; 'one has one's own taste, or one has n't.'

Confronted with this form of the Absolute, Elsie French looked perplexed; especially as her own artistic sympathies were mainly with Daphne. The situation was certainly awkward. At the time of the Barnes's financial crash, and Sir Edward Barnes's death, Heston Park, which belonged to Lady Barnes, was all that remained to her and her son. A park of a hundred acres and a few cottages went with the house; but there was no estate to support it, and it had to be let, to provide

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an income for the widow and the boy. Much of the expensive furniture had been sold before letting, but enough remained to satisfy the wants of a not very exacting tenant.

Lady Barnes had then departed to weep in exile on a pittance of about seven hundred a year. But with the marriage of her son to Miss Floyd and her millions, the mother's thoughts had turned fondly back to Heston Park. It was too big for her, of course; but the young people clearly must redeem it, and settle there. And Daphne had been quite amenable. The photographs charmed her. The house, she said, was evidently in a pure style, and it would be a delight to make it habitable again. The tenant, however, had a lease, and refused to turn out until at last Daphne had frankly bribed him to go. And now, after three years of married life, during which the young couple had rented various 'places,' besides their house in London and a villa at Tunis, Heston Park had been vacated, Daphne and Roger had descended upon it as Lady Barnes's tenants at a high rent, intent upon its restoration; and Roger's mother had been invited to their councils.

Hence, indeed, these tears. When Daphne first stepped inside the ancestral mansion of the Trescoes — such had been Lady Barnes's maiden name — she had received a severe shock. The outside, the shell of the house — delightful! But inside! — heavens! what taste, what decoration — what ruin of a beautiful thing! Half the old mantelpieces gone, the ceilings spoiled, the decorations 'busy,' pretentious, overdone, and nothing left to console her but an ugly row of bad Lelys and worse Highmores — the most despicable

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collection of family portraits she had ever set eyes upon!

Roger had looked unhappy. 'It was father and mother did it,' he admitted penitently. 'But after all, Daphne, you know they *are* Trescoes!' — this with a defensive and protecting glance at the Lelys.

Daphne was sorry for it. Her mouth tightened, and certain lines appeared about it which already prophesied what the years would make of the young face. Yet it was a pretty mouth — the mouth, above all, of one with no doubts at all as to her place and rights in the world. Lady Barnes had pronounced it 'common' in her secret thoughts before she had known its owner six weeks. But the adjective had never yet escaped the 'bulwark of the teeth.' Outwardly the mother and daughter-in-law were still on good terms. It was indeed but a week since the son and his wife had arrived — with their baby girl — at Heston Park, after a summer of yachting and fishing in Norway; since Lady Barnes had journeyed thither from London to meet them; and Mr. and Mrs. French had accepted an urgent invitation from Roger, quite sufficiently backed by Daphne, to stay for a few days with Mr. French's old pupil, before the reopening of Eton.

During that time there had been no open quarrels of any kind; but Elsie French was a sensitive creature, and she had been increasingly aware of friction and annoyance behind the scenes. And now here was Lady Barnes let loose! and Daphne might appear at any moment, before she could be re-caged.

'She puts you down so!' cried that lady, making gestures with the paper-knife she had just been employing

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on the pages of a Mudie book. 'If I tell her that something or other — it does n't matter what — cost at least a great deal of money, she has a way of smiling at you that is positively insulting! She does n't trouble to argue; she begins to laugh, and raises her eyebrows. I —I always feel as if she had struck me in the face! I know I ought n't to speak like this; I had n't meant to do it, especially to a country-woman of hers, as you are.'

'Am I?' said Elsie, in a puzzled voice.

Lady Barnes opened her eyes in astonishment.

'I meant' — the explanation was hurried — 'I thought — Mrs. Barnes was a South American? Her mother was Spanish, of course; you see it in Daphne.'

'Yes; in her wonderful eyes,' said Mrs. French warmly; 'and her grace — is n't she graceful! My husband says she moves like a sea-wave. She has given her eyes to the child.'

'Ah! and other things too, I 'm afraid!' cried Lady Barnes, carried away. 'But here is the baby.'

For the sounds of a childish voice were heard echoing in the domed hall outside. Small feet came pattering, and the drawing-room door was burst open by Roger Barnes, holding a little girl of nearly two and a half by the hand.

Lady Barnes composed herself. It is necessary to smile at children, and she endeavoured to satisfy her own sense of it.

'Come in, Beatty; come and kiss granny!' And Lady Barnes held out her arms.

But the child stood still, surveyed her grandmother with a pair of startling eyes, and then, turning, made a

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rush for the door. But her father was too quick for her. He closed it with a laugh, and stood with his back to it. The child did not cry, but, with flaming cheeks, she began to beat her father's knees with her small fists.

'Go and kiss granny, darling,' said Roger, stroking her dark head.

Beatty turned again, put both her hands behind her, and stood immoveable.

'Not kiss granny,' she said firmly. 'Don't love granny.'

'Oh, Beatty' — Mrs. French knelt down beside her — 'come and be a good little girl, and I'll show you picture-books.'

'I not Beatty — I Jemima Ann,' said the small thin voice. 'Not be a dood dirl — do upstairs.'

She looked at her father again, and then, evidently perceiving that he was not to be moved by force, she changed her tactics. Her delicate, elfish face melted into the sweetest smile; she stood on tiptoe, holding out to him her tiny arms. With a laugh of irrepressible pride and pleasure, Roger stooped to her and lifted her up. She nestled on his shoulder — a small Odalisque, dark, lithe, and tawny, beside her handsome, fair-skinned father. And Roger's manner of holding and caressing her showed the passionate affection with which he regarded her.

He again urged her to kiss her grandmother; but the child again shook her head. 'Then,' said he craftily, 'father must kiss granny.' And he began to cross the room.

But Lady Barnes stopped him, not without dignity. 'Better not press it, Roger: another time.'

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Barnes laughed, and yielded. He carried the child away, murmuring to her, 'Naughty, naughty 'ittie girl!' — a remark which Beatty, tucked under his ear, and complacently sucking her thumb, received with complete indifference.

'There, you see!' said the grandmother, with slightly flushed cheeks, as the door closed: 'the child has been already taught to dislike me, and if Roger had attempted to kiss me, she would probably have struck me.'

'Oh, no!' cried Mrs. French. 'She is a loving little thing.'

'Except when she is jealous,' said Lady Barnes, with significance. 'I told you she has inherited more than her eyes.'

Mrs. French rose. She was determined not to discuss her hostess any more, and she walked over to the bow window as though to look at the prospects of the weather, which had threatened rain. But Roger's mother was not to be repressed. Resentment and antagonism, nurtured on a hundred small incidents and trifling jars, and, to begin with, a matter of temperament, had come at last to speech. And in this charming New Englander, the wife of Roger's best friend, sympathetic, tender, with a touch in her of the nun and the saint, Lady Barnes could not help trying to find a supporter. She was a much weaker person than her square build and her double chin would have led the bystander to suppose; and her feelings had been hurt.

So that when Mrs. French returned to say that the sun seemed to be coming out, her companion, without

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heeding, went on, with emotion: 'It 's my son I am thinking of, Mrs. French. I know you 're safe, and that Roger depends upon Mr. French more than upon any one else in the world, so I can't help just saying a word to you about my anxiety. You know, when Roger married, I don't think he was much in love — in fact, I 'm sure he was n't. But now — it 's quite different. Roger has a very soft heart, and he 's very domestic. He was always the best of sons to me, and as soon as he was married he became the best of husbands. He 's devoted to Daphne now, and you see how he adores the child. But the fact is, there 's a person in this neighbourhood' (Lady Barnes lowered her voice and looked round her) — 'I only knew it for certain this morning — who — well, who might make trouble. And Daphne's temper is so passionate and uncontrolled that —'

'Dear Lady Barnes, please don't tell me any secrets!' Elsie French implored, and laid a restraining hand on the mother's arm, ready, indeed, to take up her work and fly. But Lady Barnes's chair stood between her and the door, and the occupant of it was substantial.

Laura Barnes hesitated, and in the pause two persons appeared upon the garden path outside, coming towards the open windows of the drawing-room. One was Mrs. Roger Barnes; the other was a man, remarkably tall and slender, with a stoop like that of an overgrown schoolboy, silky dark hair and moustache, and pale grey eyes.

'Dr. Lelius!' said Elsie, in astonishment. 'Was Daphne expecting him?'

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'Who is Dr. Lelius?' asked Lady Barnes, putting up her eyeglass.

Mrs. French explained that he was a South German art-critic, from Würzburg, with a great reputation. She had already met him at Eton and at Oxford.

'Another expert!' said Lady Barnes with a shrug.

The pair passed the window, absorbed apparently in conversation. Mrs. French escaped. Lady Barnes was left to discontent and solitude.

But the solitude was not for long.

When Elsie French descended for tea, an hour later, she was aware, from a considerable distance, of people and tumult in the drawing-room. Daphne's soprano voice — agreeable, but making its mark always, like its owner — could be heard running on. The young mistress of the house seemed to be admonishing, instructing, some one. Could it be her mother-in-law?

When Elsie entered, Daphne was walking up and down in excitement.

'One cannot really live with bad pictures because they happen to be one's ancestors! We won't do them any harm, mamma! of course not. There is a room upstairs where they can be stored — most carefully — and anybody who is interested in them can go and look at them. If they had only been left as they were painted! — not by Lely, of course, but by some drapery man in his studio — *passe encore!* they might have been just bearable. But you see some wretched restorer went and daubed them all over a few years ago.'

'We went to the best man we could find! We took the best advice!' cried Lady Barnes, sitting stiff and

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crimson in a deep arm-chair, opposite the luckless row of portraits that Daphne was denouncing.

'I'm sure you did. But then, you see, nobody knew anything at all about it in those days. The restorers were all murderers. Ask Dr. Lelius.'

Daphne pointed to the stranger, who was leaning against an arm-chair beside her in an embarrassed attitude, as though he were endeavouring to make the chair a buffer between himself and Lady Barnes.

Dr. Lelius bowed.

'It is a modern art,' he said with diffidence, and an accent creditably slight — 'a quite modern art. We hafe a great man at Würzburg.'

'I don't suppose he professes to know anything about English pictures, does he?' asked Lady Barnes with scorn.

'Ach! — I do not propose that Mrs. Barnes entrust him wid dese pictures, Madame. It is now too late.'

And the willowy German looked, with a half-repressed smile, at the row of pictures — all staring at the bystander with the same saucer eyes, the same wooden arms, and the same brilliance of modern paint and varnish, which not even the passage of four years since it was applied had been able greatly to subdue.

Lady Barnes lifted shoulders and eyes — a woman's angry protest against the tyranny of knowledge.

'All the same, they are my forbears, my kith and kin,' she said, with emphasis. 'But of course Mrs. Barnes is mistress here: I suppose she will do as she pleases.'

The German stared politely at the carpet. It was now Daphne's turn to shrug. She threw herself into a

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chair, with very red cheeks, one foot hanging over the other, and the fingers of her hands, which shone with diamonds, tapping the chair impatiently. Her dress of a delicate pink, touched here and there with black, her wide black hat, and the eyes which glowed from the small pointed face beneath it; the tumbling masses of her dark hair as contrasted with her general lightness and slenderness; the red of the lips, the whiteness of the hands and brow, the dainty irregularity of feature: these things made a Watteau sketch of her, all pure colour and lissomeness, with dots and scratches of intense black. Daphne was much handsomer than she had been as a girl, but also a trifle less refined. All her points were intensified — her eyes had more flame; the damask of her cheek was deeper; her grace was wilder, her voice a little shriller than of old.

While the uncomfortable silence which the two women had made around them still lasted, Roger Barnes appeared on the garden steps.

'Hullo! any tea going?' He came in, without waiting for an answer, looked from his mother to Daphne, from Daphne to his mother, and laughed uncomfortably.

'Still bothering about those beastly pictures?' he said as he helped himself to a cup of tea.

'*Thank* you, Roger!' said Lady Barnes.

'I did n't mean any harm, mother.' He crossed over to her and sat down beside her. 'I say, Daphne, I 've got an idea. Why should n't mother have them? She's going to take a house, she says. Let's hand them all over to her!'

Lady Barnes's lips trembled with indignation. 'The Trescoes who were born and died in this house, belong

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here!' The tone of the words showed the stab to feeling and self-love. 'It would be a sacrilege to move them.'

'Well then, let's move ourselves!' exclaimed Daphne, springing up. 'We can let this house again, can't we, Roger?'

'We can, I suppose,' said Roger, munching his bread and butter; 'but we're not going to.'

He raised his head and looked quietly at her.

'I think we'd better!' The tone was inperious. Daphne, with her thin arms and hands locked behind her, paused beside her husband.

Dr. Lelius, stealthily raising his eyes, observed the two. A strange little scene — not English at all. The English, he understood, were a phlegmatic people. What had this little Southerner to do among them? And what sort of fellow was the husband?

It was evident that some mute coloquy passed between the husband and wife — disapproval on his part, attempt to assert authority, defiance, on hers. Then the fair-skinned English face, confronting Daphne, wavered and weakened, and Roger smiled into the eyes transfixing him.

'Ah!' thought Lelius, 'she has him, de poor fool!'

Roger, coming over to his mother, began a murmured conversation. Daphne, still breathing quick, consented to talk to Dr. Lelius and Mrs. French. Lelius, who travelled widely, had brought her news of some pictures in a château of the Bourbonnais — pictures that her whole mind was set on acquiring. Elsie French noticed the *expertise* of her talk; the intellectual development it implied; the passion of will which accom-

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panied it. 'To the dollar, all things are possible' — one might have phrased it so.

The soft September air came in through the open windows, from a garden flooded with western sun. Suddenly through the subdued talk which filled the drawing-room — each group in it avoiding the other— the sound of a motor arriving made itself heard.

'Heavens! who on earth knows we 're here?' said Barnes, looking up.

For they had only been camping a week in the house, far too busy to think of neighbours. They sat expectant and annoyed, reproaching each other with not having told the butler to say 'Not at home.' Lady Barnes's attitude had in it something else — a little anxiety; but it escaped notice. Steps came through the hall, and the butler, throwing open the door, announced —

'Mrs. Fairmile.'

Roger Barnes sprang to his feet. His mother, with a little gasp, caught him by the arm instinctively. There was a general rise and a movement of confusion, till the new-comer, advancing, offered her hand to Daphne.

'I am afraid, Mrs. Barnes, I am disturbing you all. The butler told me you had only been here a few days. But Lady Barnes and your husband are such old friends of mine that, as soon as I heard — through our old postmistress, I think — that you had arrived, I thought I might venture.'

The charming voice dropped, and the speaker waited, smiling, her eyes fixed on Daphne. Daphne had taken her hand in some bewilderment, and was now looking

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at her husband for assistance. It was clear to Elsie French, in the background, that Daphne neither knew the lady nor the lady's name, and that the visit had taken her entirely by surprise.

Barnes recovered himself quickly. 'I had no idea you were in these parts,' he said, as he brought a chair forward for the visitor, and stood beside her a moment.

Lady Barnes, observing him, as she stiffly greeted the newcomer — his cool manner, his deepened colour — felt the usual throb of maternal pride in him, intensified by alarm and excitement.

'Oh, I am staying a day or two with Duchess Mary,' said the newcomer. 'She is a little older — and no less gouty, poor dear, than she used to be. Mrs. Barnes, I have heard a great deal of you — though you may n't know anything about me. Ah! Dr. Lelius?'

The German, bowing awkwardly, yet radiant, came forward to take the hand extended to him.

'They did nothing but talk about you at the Louvre, when I was there last week,' she said, with a little confidential nod. 'You have made them horribly uncomfortable about some of their things. Is n't it a pity to know too much?'

She turned toward Daphne. 'I 'm afraid that 's your case too.' She smiled, and the smile lit up a face full of delicate lines and wrinkles, which no effort had been made to disguise; a tired face, where the eyes spoke from caverns of shade, yet with the most appealing and persuasive beauty.

'Do you mean about pictures?' said Daphne, a little coldly. 'I don't know as much as Dr. Lelius.'

Humour leaped into the eyes fixed upon her; but

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Mrs. Fairmile only said: 'That 's not given to the rest of us mortals. But after all, *having 's* better than knowing. Don't — *don't* you possess the Vitali Signorelli?'

Her voice was most musical and flattering. Daphne smiled in spite of herself. 'Yes, we do. It 's in London now — waiting till we can find a place for it.'

'You must let me make a pilgrimage — when it comes. But you know you 'd find a number of things at Upcott — where I 'm staying now — that would interest you. I forget whether you 've met the Duchess?'

'This is our first week here,' said Roger, interposing. 'The house has been let till now. We came down to see what could be made of it.'

His tone was only just civil. His mother, looking on, said to herself that he was angry — and with good reason.

But Mrs. Fairmile still smiled.

'Ah! the Lelys!' she cried, raising her hand slightly toward the row of portraits on the wall. 'The dear impossible things! Are you still discussing them — as we used to do?'

Daphne started. 'You know this house, then?'

The smile broadened into a laugh of amusement, as Mrs. Fairmile turned to Roger's mother.

'Don't I, dear Lady Barnes — don't I know this house?'

Lady Barnes seemed to straighten in her chair. 'Well, you were here often enough to know it,' she said abruptly. 'Daphne, Mrs. Fairmile is a distant cousin of ours.'

'Distant, but quite enough to swear by!' said the

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visitor, gaily. 'Yes, Mrs. Barnes, I knew this house very well in old days. It has many charming points.' She looked round with a face that had suddenly become coolly critical, an embodied intelligence.

Daphne, as though divining for the first time a listener worthy of her steel, began to talk with some rapidity of the changes she wished to make. She talked with an evident desire to show off, to make an impression. Mrs. Fairmile listened attentively, occasionally throwing in a word of criticism or comment, in the softest, gentlest voice. But somehow, whenever she spoke, Daphne felt vaguely irritated. She was generally put slightly in the wrong by her visitor, and Mrs. Fairmile's extraordinary knowledge of Heston Park, and of everything connected with it, was so odd and disconcerting. She had a laughing way, moreover, of appealing to Roger Barnes himself to support a recollection or an opinion, which presently produced a contraction of Daphne's brows. Who was this woman? A cousin — a cousin who knew every inch of the house, and seemed to be one of Roger's closest friends? It was really too strange that in all these years Roger should never have said a word about her!

The red mounted in Daphne's cheek. She began, moreover, to feel herself at a disadvantage to which she was not accustomed. Dr. Lelius, meanwhile, turned to Mrs. Fairmile, whenever she was allowed to speak, with a joyous yet inarticulate deference he had never shown to his hostess. They understood each other at a word or a glance. Beside them Daphne, with all her cleverness, soon appeared as a child for whom one makes allowances.

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A vague anger swelled in her throat. She noticed, too, Roger's silence and Lady Barnes's discomfort. There was clearly something here that had been kept from her — something to be unravelled!

Suddenly the newcomer rose. Mrs. Fairmile wore a dress of some pale grey stuff, cob-web-light and transparent, over a green satin. It had the effect of sea-water, and her grey hat, with its pale green wreath, framed the golden-grey of her hair. Every one of her few adornments was exquisite — so was her grace as she moved. Daphne's pink-and-black vivacity beside her seemed a pinchbeck thing.

'Well, now, when will you all come to Upcott?' Mrs. Fairmile said graciously, as she shook hands. 'The Duchess will be enchanted to see you any day, and —'

'Thank you! but we really can't come so far,' said a determined voice. 'We have only a shaky old motor — our new one is n't ready yet — and besides, we want all our time for the house.'

'You make him work so hard?'

Mrs. Fairmile, laughing, pointed to the speaker. Roger looked up involuntarily, and Daphne saw the look.

'Roger has nothing to do,' she said, quickly. 'Thank you very much: we will certainly come. I 'll write to you. How many miles did you say it was?'

'Oh, nothing for a motor! — twenty-five. We used to think it nothing for a ride, did n't we?'

The speaker, who was just passing through the door, turned towards Roger, who with Lelius, was escorting her, with a last gesture — gay, yet, like all her gestures, charged with a slight yet deliberate significance.

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They disappeared. Daphne walked to the window, biting her lip.

As she stood there Herbert French came into the room, looking a little shy and ill at ease, and behind him three persons, a clergyman in an Archdeacon's apron and gaiters, and two ladies. Daphne, perceiving them sideways in a mirror to her right, could not repress a gesture and muttered sound of annoyance.

French introduced Archdeacon Mountford, his wife and sister. Roger, it seemed, had met them in the hall, and sent them in. He himself had been carried off on some business by the head keeper.

Daphne turned ungraciously. Her colour was very bright, her eyes a little absent and wild. The two ladies, both clad in pale brown stuffs, large mushroom hats, and stout country boots, eyed her nervously, and as they sat down, at her bidding, they left the Archdeacon — who was the vicar of the neighbouring town — to explain, with much amiable stammering, that seeing the Duchess's carriage at the front door, as they were crossing the park, they presumed that visitors were admitted, and had ventured to call.

Daphne received the explanation without any cordiality. She did indeed bid the callers sit down, and ordered some fresh tea. But she took no pains to entertain them, and if Lady Barnes and Herbert French had not come to the rescue, they would have fared but ill. The Archdeacon, in fact, did come to grief. For him Mrs. Barnes was just a 'foreigner,' imported from some unknown and, of course, inferior *milieu*, one who had never been 'a happy English child,' and must

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therefore be treated with indulgence. He endeavoured to talk to her — kindly — about her country. A branch of his own family, he informed her, had settled about a hundred years before this date in the United States. He gave her, at some length, the genealogy of the branch, then of the main stock to which he himself belonged, presuming that she was, at any rate, acquainted with the name? It was, he said, his strong opinion that American women were very 'bright.' For himself he could not say that he even disliked the accent, it was so 'quaint.' Did Mrs. Barnes know many of the American bishops? He himself had met a large number of them at a reception at the Church House, but it had really made him quite uncomfortable! They wore no official dress, and there was he — a mere Archdeacon! — in gaiters. And, of course, no one thought of calling them 'my lord.' It certainly was very curious — to an Englishman. And Methodist bishops! — such as he was told America possessed in plenty — that was still more curious. One of the Episcopalian bishops, however, had preached — in Westminster Abbey — a remarkable sermon, on a very sad subject, not perhaps a subject to be discussed in a drawing-room — but still —

Suddenly the group on the other side of the room became aware that the Archdeacon's amiable prosing had been sharply interrupted — that Daphne, not he, was holding the field. A gust of talk arose — Daphne declaiming, the Archdeacon, after a first pause of astonishment, changing aspect and tone. French, looking across the room, saw the mask of conventional amiability stripped from what was really a strong and

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rather tyrannical face. The man's prominent mouth and long upper lip emerged. He drew his chair back from Daphne's; he tried once or twice to stop or argue with her, and finally he rose abruptly.

'My dear!' — his wife turned hastily — 'We must not detain Mrs. Barnes longer!'

The two ladies looked at the Archdeacon — the god of their idolatry; then at Daphne. Hurriedly, like birds frightened by a shot, they crossed the room and just touched their hostess's hand; the Archdeacon, making up for their precipitancy by a double dose of dignity, bowed himself out; the door closed behind them.

'Daphne! — my dear! what is the matter?' cried Lady Barnes, in dismay.

'He spoke to me impertinently about my country!' said Daphne, turning upon her, her black eyes blazing, her cheeks white with excitement.

'The Archdeacon! — he is always so polite!'

'He talked like a fool — about things he does n't understand!' was Daphne's curt reply, as she gathered up her hat and some letters, and moved towards the door.

'About what? My dear Daphne! He could not possibly have meant to offend you! Could he, Mr. French?' Lady Barnes turned plaintively towards her very uncomfortable companions.

Daphne confronted her.

'If he chooses to think America immoral and degraded because American divorce laws are different from the English laws, let him think it! — but he has no business to air his views to an American — at a first

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visit, too!' said Daphne passionately, and, drawing herself up, she swept out of the room, leaving the others dumfounded.

'Oh dear! oh dear!' wailed Lady Barnes. 'And the Archdeacon is so important! Daphne might have been rude to anybody else — but not the Archdeacon!'

'How did they manage to get into such a subject — so quickly?' asked Elsie in bewilderment.

'I suppose he took it for granted that Daphne agreed with him! All decent people do.'

Lady Barnes's wrath was evident — so was her indiscretion. Elsie French applied herself to soothing her, while Herbert French disappeared into the garden with a book. His wife, however, presently observed from the drawing-room that he was not reading. He was pacing the lawn, with his hands behind him, and his eyes on the grass. The slight, slowly-moving figure stood for meditation, and Elsie French knew enough to understand that the incidents of the afternoon might well supply any friend of Roger Barnes's with food for meditation. Herbert had not been in the drawing-room when Mrs. Fairmile was calling, but no doubt he had met her in the hall when she was on her way to her carriage.

Meanwhile Daphne, in her own room, was also employed in meditation. She had thrown herself, frowning, into a chair beside a window which overlooked the park. The landscape had a gentle charm — spreading grass, low hills, and scattered woods — under a warm September sun. But it had no particular accent, and Daphne thought it both tame and depressing; like an English society made up of Archdeacon Mount-

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fords and their women-kind! What a futile, irritating man! — and what dull creatures were the wife and sister! — mere echoes of their lord and master. She had behaved badly, of course; in a few days she supposed the report of her outburst would be all over the place. She did not care. Even for Roger's sake she was not going to cringe to these poor provincial standards.

And all the time she knew very well that it was not the Archdeacon and his fatuities that were really at fault. The afternoon had been decided not by the Mountfords' call, but by that which had preceded it.

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CHAPTER VI

MRS. BARNES, however, made no immediate reference to the matter which was in truth filling her mind. She avoided her husband and mother-in-law, both of whom were clearly anxious to capture her attention; and, by way of protecting herself from them, she spent the late afternoon in looking through Italian photographs with Dr. Lelius.

But about seven o'clock Roger found her lying on her sofa, her hands clasped behind her head — frowning — the lips working.

He came in rather consciously, glancing at his wife in hesitation.

'Are you tired, Daphne?'

'No.'

'A penny for your thoughts, then!' He stooped over her and looked into her eyes.

Daphne made no reply. She continued to look straight before her.

'What 's the matter with you?' he said, at last.

'I 'm wondering,' said Daphne slowly, 'how many more cousins and great friends you have, that I know nothing about. I think another time it would be civil — just that! — to give me a word of warning.'

Roger pulled at his moustache. 'I had n't an idea she was within a thousand miles of this place! But, if I had, I could n't have imagined she would have the face to come here!'

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'Who is she?' With a sudden movement Daphne turned her eyes upon him.

'Well, there 's no good making any bones about it,' said the man, flushing. 'She 's a girl I was once engaged to, for a very short time,' he added hastily. 'It was the week before my father died, and our smash came. As soon as it came she threw me over.'

Daphne's intense gaze, under the slightly frowning brows, disquieted him.

'How long were you engaged to her?'

'Three weeks.'

'Had she been staying here before that?'

'Yes — she often stayed here. Daphne! don't look like that! She treated me abominably; and before I married you I had come not to care twopence about her.'

'You did care about her when you proposed to me?'

'No! — not at all! Of course, when I went out to New York I was sore, because she had thrown me over.'

'And I' — Daphne made a scornful lip — 'was the feather-bed to catch you as you fell. It never occurred to you that it might have been honourable to tell me?'

'Well, I don't know — I never asked you to tell me of your affairs!'

Roger, his hands in his pockets, looked round at her with an awkward laugh.

'I told you everything!' was the quick reply — '*everything*.'

Roger uncomfortably remembered that so indeed it had been; and moreover that he had been a good deal bored at the time by Daphne's confessions.

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He had not been enough in love with her — then — to find them of any great account. And certainly it had never occurred to him to pay them back in kind. What did it matter to her or to any one that Chloe Morant had made a fool of him? His recollection of the fooling, at the time he proposed to Daphne, was still so poignant that it would have been impossible to speak of it. And within a few months afterwards he had practically forgotten it — and Chloe too. Of course he could not see her again, for the first time, without being 'a bit upset'; mostly, indeed, by the boldness — the brazenness — of her behaviour. But his emotions were of no tragic strength, and, as Lady Barnes had complained to Mrs. French, he was now honestly in love with Daphne and his child.

So that he had nothing but impatience and annoyance for the recollection of the visit of the afternoon; and Daphne's attitude distressed him. Why, she was as pale as a ghost! His thought sent Chloe Fairmile to the deuce.

'Look here, dear!' he said, kneeling down suddenly beside his wife — 'don't you get any nonsense into your head. I 'm not the kind of fellow who goes philandering after a woman when she 's jilted him. I took her measure, and after you accepted me I never gave her another thought. I forgot her, dear — bag and baggage! Kiss me, Daphne!'

But Daphne still held him at bay.

'How long were you engaged to her?' she repeated.

'I 've told you — three weeks!' said the man, reluctantly.

'How long had you known her?'

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'A year or two. She was a distant cousin of father's. Her father was Governor of Madras, and her mother was dead. She could n't stand India for long together, and she used to stay about with relations. Why she took a fancy to me I can't imagine. She 's so booky and artistic, and that kind of thing, that I never understood half the time what she was talking about. Now you 're just as clever, you know, darling, but I do understand you.'

Roger's conscience made a few dim remonstrances. It asked him whether in fact, standing on his own qualifications and advantages of quite a different kind, he had not always felt himself triumphantly more than a match for Chloe and her cleverness. But he paid no heed to them. He was engaged in stroking Daphne's fingers and studying the small set face.

'Whom did she marry?' asked Daphne, putting an end to the stroking.

'A fellow in the army — Major Fairmile — a smart, popular sort of chap. He was her father's aide-de-camp when they married — just after we did — and they 've been in India, or Egypt, ever since. They don't get on, and I suppose she comes and quarters herself on the old Duchess — as she used to on us.'

'You seem to know all about her! Yes, I remember now, I 've heard people speak of her to you. Mrs. Fairmile — Mrs. Fairmile — yes, I remember,' said Daphne, in a brooding voice, her cheeks becoming suddenly very red. 'Your uncle — in town — mentioned her. I did n't take any notice.'

'Why should you? She does n't matter a fig, either to you or to me!'

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'It matters to me very much that these people who spoke of her — your uncle and the others — knew what I did n't know!' cried Daphne, passionately. She stared at Roger, strangely conscious that something epoch-making and decisive had happened. Roger had had a secret from her all these years — that was what had happened; and now she had discovered it. That he *could* have a secret from her, however, was the real discovery. She felt a fierce resentment, and yet a kind of added respect for him. All the time he had been the private owner of thoughts and recollections that she had no part in, and the fact roused in her tumult and bitterness. Nevertheless the disturbance which it produced in her sense of property, the shock and anguish of it, brought back something of the passion of love she had felt in the first year of their marriage.

During these three years she had more than once shown herself insanely jealous for the merest trifles. But Roger had always laughed at her, and she had ended by laughing at herself.

Yet all the time he had had this secret. She sat looking at him hard with her astonishing eyes; and he grew more and more uneasy.

'Well, some of them knew,' he said, answering her last reproach. 'And they knew that I was jolly well quit of her! I suppose I ought to have told you, Daphne — of course I ought — I 'm sorry. But the fact was I never wanted to think of her again. And I certainly never want to see her again! Why, in the name of goodness, did you accept that tea-fight?'

'Because I mean to go.'

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'Then you 'll have to go without me,' was the incautious reply.

'Oh, so you 're afraid of meeting her! I shall know what to think, if you *don't* go.' Daphne sat erect, her hands clasped round her knees.

Roger made a sound of wrath, and threw his cigarette into the fire. Then, turning round again to face her, he tried to control himself.

'Look here, Daphne, don't let us quarrel about this. I 'll tell you everything you want to know — the whole beastly story. But it can't be pleasant to me to meet a woman who treated me as she did — and it ought n't to be pleasant to you either. It was like her audacity to come this afternoon.'

'She simply wants to get hold of you again!' Daphne sprang up as she spoke with a violent movement, her face blazing.

'Nonsense! she came out of nothing in the world but curiosity, and because she likes making people uncomfortable. She knew very well mother and I did n't want her!'

But the more he tried to persuade her the more determined was Daphne to pay the promised visit, and that he should pay it with her. He gave way at last, and she allowed herself to be soothed and caressed. Then, when she seemed to have recovered herself, he gave her a tragic-comic account of the three weeks' engagement, and the manner in which it had been broken off: caustic enough, one might have thought, to satisfy the most unfriendly listener. Daphne heard it all quietly.

Then her maid came, and she donned a tea-gown.

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When Roger returned, after dressing, he found her still abstracted.

'I suppose you kissed her?' she said abruptly, as they stood by the fire together.

He broke out in laughter and annoyance, and called her a little goose, with his arm round her.

But she persisted. 'You did kiss her?'

'Well, of course I did! What else is one engaged for?'

'I 'm certain she wished for a great deal of kissing!' said Daphne, quickly.

Roger was silent. Suddenly there swept through him the memory of the scene in the orchard, and with it an admission — wrung, as it were, from a wholly unwilling self — that it had remained for him a scene unique and unapproached. In that one hour the 'muddy vesture' of common feeling and desire that closed in his manhood had taken fire and burnt to a pure flame, fusing, so it seemed, body and soul. He had not thought of it for years, but now that he was made to think of it, the old thrill returned — a memory of something heavenly, ecstatic, far transcending the common hours and the common earth.

The next moment he had thrown the recollection angrily from him. Stooping to his wife, he kissed her warmly. 'Look here, Daphne! I wish you 'd let that woman alone! Have I ever looked at any one but you, old girl, since that day at Mount Vernon?'

Daphne let him hold her close: but all the time, thoughts — ugly thoughts — like 'little mice stole in and out.' The notion of Roger and that woman, in the past, engaged — always together, in each other's arms, tormented her unendurably.

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She did not, however, say a word to Lady Barnes on the subject. The morning following Mrs. Fairmile's visit that lady began a rather awkward explanation of Chloe Fairmile's place in the family history, and of the reasons for Roger's silence and her own. Daphne took it apparently with complete indifference, and managed to cut it short in the middle.

Nevertheless she brooded over the whole business; and her resentment showed itself, first of all, in a more and more drastic treatment of Heston, its pictures, decorations and appointments. Lady Barnes dared not oppose her any more. She understood that if she were thwarted, or even criticised, Daphne would simply decline to live there, and her own link with the place would be once more broken. So she withdrew angrily from the scene, and tried not to know what was going on. Meanwhile a note of invitation had been addressed to Daphne by the Duchess, and had been accepted; Roger had been reminded, at the point of the bayonet, that go he must; and Dr. Lelius had transferred himself from Heston to Upcott, and the companionship of Mrs. Fairmile.

It was the last day of the Frenches' visit. Roger and Herbert French had been trying to get a brace or two of partridges on the long-neglected and much-poached estate; and on the way home French expressed a hope that, now they were to settle at Heston, Roger would take up some of the usual duties of the country gentleman. He spoke in the half-jesting way characteristic of the modern Mentor. The old didactics have long gone out of fashion, and the moralist of to-day, instead

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of preaching, *ore rotundo*, must only 'hint a fault and hesitate dislike.' But, hide it as he might, there was an ethical and religious passion in French that would out, and was soon indeed to drive him from Eton to a town parish. He had been ordained some two years before this date.

It was this inborn pastoral gift, just as real as the literary or artistic gifts, and containing the same potentialities of genius as they, which was leading him to feel a deep anxiety about the Barnes's *ménage*. It seemed to him necessary that Daphne should respect her husband; and Roger, in a state of complete idleness, was not altogether respectable.

So, with much quizzing of him as 'the Squire,' French tried to goad his companion into some of a Squire's duties. 'Stand for the County Council, old fellow,' he said. 'Your father was on it, and it 'll give you something to do.'

To his surprise Roger at once acquiesced. He was striding along in cap and knickerbockers, his curly hair still thick and golden on his temples, his clear skin flushed with exercise, his general physical aspect even more splendid than it had been in his first youth. Beside him, the slender figure and pleasant irregular face of Herbert French would have been altogether effaced and eclipsed but for the Eton master's two striking points: prematurely white hair, remarkably thick and abundant; and very blue eyes, shy, spiritual and charming.

'I don't mind,' Roger was saying, 'if you think they 'd have me. Beastly bore, of course! But one 's got to do something for one's keep.'

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He looked round with a smile, slightly conscious. The position he had occupied for some three years, of the idle and penniless husband dependent on his wife's dollars, was not, he knew, an exalted one in French's eyes.

'Oh! you 'll find it quite tolerable,' said French. 'Roads and schools do as well as anything else to break one's teeth on. We shall see you a magistrate directly.'

Roger laughed. 'That would be a good one! — I say, you know, I hope Daphne 's going to like Heston.'

French hoped so too, guardedly.

'I hear the Archdeacon got on her nerves yesterday?'

He looked at his companion with a slight laugh and a shrug.

'That does n't matter.'

'I don't know. He 's rather a spiteful old party. And Daphne 's accustomed to be made a lot of, you know. In London there 's always a heap of people making up to her — and in Paris, too. She talks uncommon good French — learnt it in the convent. I don't understand a word of what they talk about — but she 's a queen — I can tell you! She does n't want Archdeacons prating at her.'

'It 'll be all right when she knows the people.'

'Of course, mother and I get along here all right. We 've got to pick up the threads again; but we do know all the people, and we like the old place for grandfather's sake, and all the rest of it. But there is n't much to amuse Daphne here.'

'She 'll be doing up the house.'

'And offending mother all the time. I say, French, don't you think art 's an awful nuisance! When I

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hear Lelius yarning on about *quattro-cento* and *cinque-cento*, I could drown myself. No! I suppose you 're tarred with the same brush.' Roger shrugged his shoulders. 'Well, I don't care, so long as Daphne gets what she wants, and the place suits the child.' His ruddy countenance took a shade of anxiety.

French inquired what reason there was to suppose that Beatty would not thrive perfectly at Heston. Roger could only say that the child had seemed to flag a little since their arrival. Appetite not quite so good, temper difficult, and so on. Their smart lady-nurse was not quite satisfied. 'And I 've been finding out about doctors here,' the young father went on, knitting his brows: 'blokes, most of them, and such old blokes! I would n't trust Beatty to one of them. But I 've heard of a new man at Hereford — awfully good, they say — a wunner! And after all a motor would soon run him out!'

He went on talking eagerly about the child, her beauty, her cleverness, the plans Daphne had for her bringing up, and so on. No other child ever had been, ever could be, so fetching, so 'cunning,' so lovely, such a duck! The Frenches, indeed, possessed a boy of two, reputed handsome. Roger wished to show himself indulgent to anything that might be pleaded for him. 'Dear little fellow!' — of course. But Beatty! Well! it was surprising, indeed, that he should find himself the father of such a little miracle; he did n't know what he 'd done to deserve it. Herbert French smiled as he walked.

'Of course, I hope there 'll be a boy,' said Roger, stopping suddenly to look at Heston Park, half a mile

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off, emerging from the trees. 'Daphne would like a boy — so should I, and particularly now that we 've got the old house back again.'

He stood and surveyed it. French noticed in the growing manliness of his face and bearing the signs of things and forces ancestral, of those ghostly hands stretching from the past that in a long settled society tend to push a man into his right place and keep him there. The Barnes family was tolerable, though not distinguished. Roger's father's great temporary success in politics and business had given it a passing splendour, now quenched in the tides of failure and disaster which had finally overwhelmed his career. Roger evidently did not want to think much about his Barnes heritage. But it was clear also that he was proud of the Trescoes; that he had fallen back upon them, so to speak. Since the fifteenth century there had always been a Trescoe at Heston; and Roger had already taken to browsing in county histories and sorting family letters. French foresaw a double-barrelled surname before long — perhaps, just in time for the advent of the future son and heir who was already a personage in the mind, if not yet positively expected.

'My dear fellow, I hope Mrs. Barnes will give you not one son, but many!' he said, in answer to his companion's outburst. 'They 're wanted nowadays.'

Roger nodded and smiled, and then passed on to discussion of county business and county people. He had already, it seemed, informed himself to a rather surprising degree. The shrewd, upright county gentleman was beginning to emerge, oddly, from the Apollo. The merits and absurdities of the type were already

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there, indeed, *in posse*. How persistent was the type, and the instinct! A man of Roger's antecedents might seem to swerve from the course; but the smallest favourable variation of circumstances, and there he was again on the track, trotting happily between the shafts.

'If only the wife plays up!' thought French.

The recollection of Daphne, indeed, emerged simultaneously in both minds.

'Daphne, you know, won't be able to stand this all the year round,' said Roger. 'By George, no! not with a wagon-load of Leliuses!' Then, with a sudden veer and a flush: 'I say, French, do you know what sort of state the Fairmile marriage is in by now? I think that lady might have spared her call — don't you?'

French kept his eyes on the path. It was the first time, as far as he was concerned, that Roger had referred to the incident. Yet the tone of the questioner implied a past history. It was to him, indeed, that Roger had come, in the first bitterness of his young grief and anger, after the 'jilting.' French had tried to help him, only to find that he was no more a match for the lady than the rest of the world.

As to the call and the invitation, he agreed heartily that a person of delicacy would have omitted them. The Fairmile marriage, it was generally rumoured, had broken down hopelessly.

'Faults on both sides, of course. Fairmile is and always was an unscrupulous beggar! He left Eton just as you came, but I remember him well.'

Roger began a sentence to the effect that if Fairmile had no scruples of his own, Chloe would scarcely have taught him any; but he checked himself abruptly in

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the middle, and the two men passed to other topics. French began to talk of East London, and the parish he was to have there. Roger, indifferent at first, did not remain so. He did not profess, indeed, any enthusiasm of humanity; but French found in him new curiosities. That children should starve, and slave, and suffer — *that* moved him. He was, at any rate, for hanging the parents.

The day of the Upcott visit came, and, in spite of all recalcitrance, Roger was made to mount the motor beside his wife. Lady Barnes had entirely refused to go, and Mr. and Mrs. French had departed that morning for Eton.

As the thing was inevitable, Roger's male philosophy came to his aid. Better laugh and have done with it. So that, as he and Daphne sped along the autumn lanes, he talked about anything and everything. He expressed, for instance, his friendly admiration for Elsie French.

'She 's just the wife for old Herbert — and, by George, she 's in love with him!'

'A great deal too much in love with him!' said Daphne, sharply. The day was chilly, with a strong east wind blowing, and Daphne's small figure and face were enveloped in a marvellous wrap, compounded in equal proportions of Russian sables and white cloth. It had not long arrived from Worth, and Roger had allowed himself somes jibes as to its probable cost. Daphne's 'simplicity,' the pose of her girlhood, was in fact breaking down in all directions. The arrogant spending instinct had gained upon the moderating

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and self-restraining instinct. The results often made Barnes uncomfortable. But he was inarticulate, and easily intimidated — by Daphne. With regard to Mrs. French, however, he took up the cudgels at once. Why should n't Elsie adore her man, if it pleased her? Old Herbert was worth it.

Women, said Daphne, should never put themselves wholly in a man's power. Moreover, wifely adoration was particularly bad for clergymen, who were far too much inclined already to give themselves airs.

'I say! Herbert never gives himself airs!'

'They both did — to me. They have quite different ways from us, and they make one feel it. They have family prayers — we don't. They have ascetic ideas about bringing up children — I have n't. Elsie would think it self-indulgent and abominable to stay in bed to breakfast — I don't. The fact is, all her interests and ideals are quite different from mine, and I am rather tired of being made to feel inferior.'

'Daphne! what rubbish! I 'm certain Elsie French never had such an idea in her head. She 's awfully soft and nice; I never saw a bit of conceit in her.'

'She 's soft outside and steel inside. Well, never mind! we don't get on. She 's the old America, I 'm the new,' said Daphne, half frowning, half laughing; 'and I 'm as good as she.'

'You 're a very good-looking woman, anyway,' said Roger, admiring the vision of her among the warm browns and shining whites of her wrap. 'Much better-looking than when I married you.' He slipped an arm under the cloak and gave her small waist a squeeze.

Daphne turned her eyes upon him. In their black

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depths his touch had roused a passion which was by no means all tenderness. There was in it something threatening, something intensely and inordinately possessive. 'That means that you did n't think me good-looking at all, as compared with — Chloe?' she said insistently.

'Really, Daphne!' — Roger withdrew his arm with a rather angry laugh — 'the way you twist what one says! I declare I won't make you any more pretty speeches for an age.'

Daphne scarcely replied; but there dawned on her face the smile — melting, provocative, intent — which is the natural weapon of such a temperament. With a quick movement she nestled to her husband's side, and Roger was soon appeased.

The visit which followed always counted in Roger Barnes's memory as the first act of the tragedy, the first onset of the evil that engulfed him.

They found the old Duchess, Mrs. Fairmile, and Dr. Lelius, alone. The Duchess had been the penniless daughter of an Irish clergyman, married *en secondes noces* for her somewhat queer and stimulating personality, by an epicurean duke, who, after having provided the family with a sufficient store of dull children by an aristocratic mother, thought himself at liberty, in his declining years, to please himself. He had left her the dower-house — small but delicately Jacobean — and she was now nearly as old as the Duke had been when he married her. She was largely made, shapeless, and untidy. Her mannish face and head were tied up in a kind of lace coif; she had long since

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abandoned all thought of a waist; and her strong chin rested on an ample bosom.

As soon as Mrs. Barnes was seated near her hostess, Lelius — who had an intimate acquaintance, through their pictures, with half the great people of Europe — began to observe the Duchess's impressions. Amused curiosity, first. Evidently Daphne represented to her one of the queer, crude types that modern society is always throwing up on the shores of life — like strange beasts from deep-sea soundings.

An American heiress, half Spanish — South-American Spanish — with no doubt a dash of Indian; no manners, as Europe understands them; unlimited money, and absurd pretensions — so Chloe said — in the matter of art; a mixture of the pedant and the *parvenue;* where on earth had young Barnes picked her up! It was in some such way, no doubt — so Lelius guessed — that the Duchess's thoughts were running.

Meanwhile Mrs. Barnes was treated with all possible civility. The Duchess inquired into the plans for rebuilding Heston; talked of her own recollections of the place, and its owners; hoped that Mrs. Barnes was pleased with the neighbourhood; and finally asked the stock question, 'And how do you like England?'

Daphne looked at her coolly. 'Moderately!' she said, with a smile, the colour rising in her cheek as she became aware, without looking at them, that Roger and Mrs. Fairmile had adjourned to the farther end of the large room, leaving her to the Duchess and Lelius.

The small eyes above the Duchess's prominent nose sparkled. 'Only moderately?' The speaker's tone expressed that she had been for once taken by surprise.

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'I 'm extremely sorry we don't please you, Mrs. Barnes.'

'You see, my expectations were so high.'

'Is it the country, or the climate, or the people, that won't do?' inquired the Duchess, amused.

'I suppose it would be civil to say the climate,' replied Daphne, laughing.

Whereupon the Duchess saw that her visitor had made up her mind not to be overawed. The great lady summoned Dr. Lelius to her aid, and she, the German, and Daphne, kept up a sparring conversation, in which Mrs. Barnes, driven on by a secret wrath, showed herself rather noisier than Englishwomen generally are. She was a little impertinent, the Duchess thought, decidedly aggressive, and not witty enough to carry it off.

Meanwhile, Daphne had instantly perceived that Mrs. Fairmile and Roger had disappeared into the conservatory; and though she talked incessantly through their absence, she felt each minute of it. When they came back for tea, she imagined that Roger looked embarrassed, while Mrs. Fairmile was all gaiety, chatting to her companion, her face raised to his, in the manner of one joyously renewing an old intimacy. As they slowly advanced up the long room, Daphne felt it almost intolerable to watch them, and her pulses began to race. *Why* had she never been told of this thing? That was what rankled; and the Southern wildness in her blood sent visions of the past and terrors of the future hurrying through her brain, even while she went on talking fast and recklessly to the Duchess.

At tea-time conversation turned on the various beau-

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tiful things which the room contained — its Nattiers, its Gobelins, its two *dessus de portes* by Boucher, and its two cabinets, of which one had belonged to Beaumarchais and the other to the *Appartement du Dauphin* at Versailles.

Daphne restrained herself for a time, asked questions, and affected no special knowledge. Then, at a pause, she lifted a careless hand, inquiring whether 'the Fragonard sketch' opposite were not the pendant of one — she named it — at Berlin.

'Ah-h-h!' said Mrs. Fairmile, with a smiling shake of the head, 'how clever of you! But that 's not a Fragonard. I wish it were. It 's an unknown. Dr. Lelius has given him a name.'

And she and Lelius fell into a discussion of the drawing that soon left Daphne behind. Native taste of the finest, mingled with the training of a lifetime, the intimate knowledge of collections of one who had lived among them from her childhood — these things had long since given Chloe Fairmile a kind of European reputation. Daphne stumbled after her, consumed with angry envy, the *précieuse* in her resenting the easy mastery of Mrs. Fairmile, and the wife in her offended by the strange beauty, the soft audacities of a woman who had once, it seemed, held Roger captive, and would, of course, like to hold him captive again.

She burned in some way to assert herself, the imperious will chafing at the slender barrier of self-control. And some malicious god did, in fact, send an opportunity.

After tea, when Roger, in spite of efforts to confine himself to the Duchess, had been once more drawn into

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the orbit of Mrs. Fairmile, as she sat fingering a cigarette between the two men, and gossiping of people and politics, the butler entered, and whispered a message to the Duchess.

The mistress of the house laughed. 'Chloe! who do you think has called? Old Marcus, of South Audley Street. He 's been at Brendon House — buying up their Romneys, I should think. And as he was passing here, he wished to show me something. Shall we have him in?'

'By all means! The last time he was here he offered you four thousand pounds for the blue Nattier,' said Chloe, with a smile, pointing to the picture.

The Duchess gave orders; and an elderly man, with long black hair, swarthy complexion, fine eyes, and a peaked forehead, was admitted, and greeted by her, Mrs. Fairmile, and Dr. Lelius as an old acquaintance. He sat down beside them, was given tea, and presented to Mr. and Mrs. Barnes. Daphne, who knew the famous dealer by sight and reputation perfectly well, was piqued that he did not recognise her. Yet she well remembered having given him an important commission not more than a year before her marriage.

As soon as a cup of tea had been dispatched, Marcus came to the business. He drew a small leather case out of the bag he had brought into the room with him; and the case, being opened, disclosed a small but marvellous piece of Sèvres.

'There!' he said, pointing triumphantly to a piece on the Duchess's chimney-piece. 'Your Grace asked me — oh! ten years ago — and again last year — to find you the pair of that. Now — you have it!'

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He put the two together, and the effect was great. The Duchess looked at it with greed — the greed of the connoisseur. But she shook her head.

'Marcus, I have no money.'

'Oh!' he protested, smiling and shrugging his shoulders.

'And I know you want a brigand's price for it.'

'Oh, nothing — nothing at all.'

The Duchess took it up, and regretfully turned it round and round.

'A thousand, Marcus?' she said, looking up.

He laughed, and would not reply.

'That means more, Marcus: how do you imagine that an old woman like me, with only just enough for bread and butter, can waste her money on Sèvres?' He grinned. She put it down resolutely. 'No! I 've got a consumptive nephew with a consumptive family. He ought to have been hung for marrying, but I 've got to send them all to Davos this winter. No, I can't, Marcus; I can't — I 'm too poor.' But her eyes caressed the shining thing.

Daphne bent forward. 'If the Duchess has *really* made up her mind, Mr. Marcus, I will take it. It would just suit me!'

Marcus started on his chair. '*Pardon, Madame!*' he said, turning hastily to look at the slender lady in white, of whom he had as yet taken no notice.

'We have the motor. We can take it with us,' said Daphne, stretching out her hand for it triumphantly.

'Madame,' said Marcus, in some agitation, 'I have not the honour. The price —'

'The price does n't matter,' said Daphne, smiling.

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'You know me quite well, Mr. Marcus. Do you remember selling a Louis Seize cabinet to Miss Floyd?'

'Ah!' The dealer was on his feet in a moment, saluting, excusing himself. Daphne heard him with graciousness. She was now the centre of the situation: she had asserted herself, and her money. Marcus outdid himself in homage. Lelius in the background looked on, a sarcastic smile hidden by his fair moustache. Mrs. Fairmile, too, smiled; Roger had grown rather hot; and the Duchess was frankly annoyed.

'I surrender it to *force majeure*,' she said, as Daphne took it from her. 'Why are we not all Americans?'

And then, leaning back in her chair, she would talk no more. The pleasure of the visit, so far as it had ever existed, was at an end.

But before the Barnes motor departed homewards, Mrs. Fairmile had again found means to carry Roger Barnes out of sight and hearing into the garden. Roger had not been able to avoid it; and Daphne, hugging the leather case, had, all the same, to look on.

When they were once more alone together, speeding through the bright sunset air, each found the other on edge.

'You were rather rough on the Duchess, Daphne!' Roger protested. 'It was n't quite nice, was it, outbidding her like that in her own house?'

Daphne flared up at once, declaring that she wanted no lessons in deportment from him or any one else, and then demanding fiercely what was the meaning of his two disappearances with Mrs. Fairmile. Whereupon Roger lost his temper still more decidedly, refusing to

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give any account of himself, and the drive passed in a continuous quarrel, which only just stopped short, on Daphne's side, of those outrageous and insulting things which were burning at the back of her tongue, while she could not as yet bring herself to say them.

An unsatisfactory peace was patched up during the evening. But in the dead of night Daphne sat up in bed, looking at the face and head of her husband beside her on the pillow. He lay peacefully sleeping, the noble outline of brow and features still nobler in the dim light which effaced all the weaker, emptier touches. Daphne felt rising within her that mingled passion of the jealous woman, which is half love, half hate, of which she had felt the first stirrings in her early jealousy of Elsie Maddison. It was the clutch of something racial and inherited — a something which the Northerner hardly knows. She had felt it before on one or two occasions, but not with this intensity. The grace of Chloe Fairmile haunted her memory, and the perfection, the corrupt perfection of her appeal to men, men like Roger.

She must wring from him — she must and would — a much fuller history of his engagement. And of those conversations in the garden, too. It stung her to recollect that, after all, he had given her no account of them. She had been sure they had not been ordinary conversations! — Mrs. Fairmile was not the person to waste her time in chit-chat.

A gust of violence swept through her. She had given Roger everything — money, ease, amusement. Where would he have been without her? And his mother, too? — tiresome, obstructive woman! For the first time that

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veil of the unspoken, that mist of loving illusion which preserves all human relations, broke down between Daphne and her marriage. Her thoughts dwelt, in a vulgar detail, on the money she had settled upon Roger — on his tendencies to extravagance — his happy-go-lucky self-confident ways. He would have been a pauper but for her; but now that he had her money safe, without a word to her of his previous engagement, he and Mrs. Fairmile might do as they pleased. The heat and corrosion of this idea spread through her being, and the will made no fight against it.

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CHAPTER VII

'You 're off to the meet?'

'I am. Look at the day!'

Chloe Fairmile, who was standing in her riding-habit at the window of the Duchess's morning-room, turned to greet her hostess.

A mild November sun shone on the garden and the woods, and Chloe's face — the more exquisite as a rule for its slight, strange withering — had caught a freshness from the morning.

The Duchess was embraced, and bore it; she herself never kissed anybody.

'You always look well, my dear, in a habit, and you know it. Tell me what I shall do with this invitation.'

'From Lady Warton? May I look?'

Chloe took a much blotted and crossed letter from the Duchess's hand.

'What were her governesses about?' said the Duchess, pointing to it. '*Really* — the education of our class! Read it!'

. . . 'Can I persuade you to come — and bring Mrs. Fairmile — next Tuesday to dinner, to meet Roger Barnes and his wife? I groan at the thought, for I think she is quite one of the most disagreeable little creatures I ever saw. But Warton says I must — a Lord-Lieutenant can't pick and choose! — and people

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as rich as they are have to be considered. I can't imagine why it is she makes herself so odious. All the Americans I ever knew I have liked particularly. It is, of course, annoying that they have so much money — but Warton says it is n't their fault — it 's Protection, or something of the kind. But Mrs. Barnes seems really to wish to trample on us. She told Warton the other day that his tapestries — you know, those we 're so proud of — that they were bad Flemish copies of something or other — a set belonging to a horrid friend of hers, I think. Warton was furious. And she 's made the people at Brendon love her for ever by insisting that they have now ruined *all* their pictures without exception, by the way they 've had them restored — et cetera, et cetera. She really makes us feel her millions — and her brains — too much. We 're paupers, but we 're not worms. Then there 's the Archdeacon — why should she fall foul of him? He tells Warton that her principles are really shocking. She told him she saw no reason why people should stick to their husbands or wives longer than it pleased them — and that in America nobody did! He does n't wish Mrs. Mountford to see much of her; — though, really, my dear, I don't think Mrs. M. is likely to give him trouble — do you? And I hear, of course, that she thinks us all dull and stuck-up, and as ignorant as savages. It 's so odd she should n't even want to be liked! — a young woman in a strange neighbourhood. But she evidently does n't, a bit. Warton declares she 's already tired of Roger — and she 's certainly not nice to him. What can be the matter? Anyway, dear Duchess, *do* come, and help us through.'

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'What, indeed, can be the matter?' repeated Chloe lightly, as she handed back the letter.

'Angela Warton never knows anything. But there 's not much need for *you* to ask, my dear,' said the Duchess quietly.

Mrs. Fairmile turned an astonished face.

'Me?'

The Duchess, more bulky, shapeless and swathed than usual, subsided on a chair, and just raised her small but sharp eyes on Mrs. Fairmile.

'What can you mean?' said Chloe, after a moment, in her gayest voice. 'I can't imagine. And I don't think I 'll try.'

She stooped and kissed the untidy lady in the chair. The Duchess bore it again, but the lines of her mouth, with the strong droop at the corners, became a trifle grim. Chloe looked at her, smiled, shook her head. The Duchess shook hers, and then they both began to talk of an engagement announced that morning in the *Times*.

Mrs. Fairmile was soon riding alone, without a groom — she was an excellent horse-woman, and she never gave any unnecessary trouble to her friends' servants — through country lanes chequered with pale sun. As for the Duchess's attack upon her, Chloe smarted. The Duchess had clearly pulled her up, and Chloe was not a person who took it well.

If Roger's American wife was by now wildly jealous of his old *fiancée*, whose fault was it? Had not Mrs. Barnes herself thrown them perpetually together? Dinners at Upcott! — invitations to Heston! — a reso-

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lute frequenting of the same festal gatherings with Mrs. Fairmile. None of it with Roger's goodwill, or his mother's, — Chloe admitted it. It had been the wife's doing — all of it. There had been even — rare occurrences — two or three balls in the neighbourhood. Roger hated dancing, but Daphne had made him go to them all. Merely that she might display her eyes, her diamonds, and her gowns? Not at all. The real psychology of it was plain. 'She wishes to keep us under observation — to give us opportunities — and then torment her husband. Very well then! — *tu l'as voulu, Madame!*'

As to the 'opportunities,' Chloe coolly confessed to herself that she had made rather a scandalous use of them. The gossip of the neighbourhood had been no doubt a good deal roused; and Daphne, it seemed, was discontented. But is it not good for such people to be discontented? The money and the arrogance of Roger's wife had provoked Roger's former *fiancée* from the beginning; the money to envy, and the arrogance to chastisement. Why not? What is society but a discipline?

As for Roger, who is it says there is a little polygamy in all men? Anyway, a man can always — nearly always — keep a corner for the old love, if the new love will let him. Roger could, at any rate; 'though he is a model husband, far better than she deserves, and anybody not a fool could manage him.'

It was a day of physical delight, especially for riders. After a warm October, the leaves were still thick on the trees; Nature had not yet resigned herself to death and sleep. Here and there an oak stood, fully green,

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among the tawny reds and golds of a flaming woodland. The gorse was yellow on the commons; and in the damp woody ways through which Chloe passed, a few primroses — frail, unseasonable blooms — pushed their pale heads through the moss. The scent of the beech-leaves under foot; the buffeting of a westerly wind; the pleasant yielding of her light frame to the movement of the horse; the glimpses of plain that every here and there showed themselves through the trees that girdled the high ground or edge along which she rode; the white steam-wreath of a train passing, far away, through strata of blue or pearly mist; an old windmill black in the middle distance; villages, sheltering among their hedges and uplands: a sky, of shadow below widely brooding over earth, and of a radiant blue flecked with white cloud above: — all the English familiar scene, awoke in Chloe Fairmile a familiar sensuous joy. Life was so good — every minute, every ounce of it! — from the Duchess's *chef* to these ethereal splendours of autumn — from the warm bath, the luxurious bed, and breakfast, she had but lately enjoyed, to these artistic memories that ran through her brain, as she glanced from side to side, reminded now of Turner, now of De Wint, revelling in the complexity of her own being. Her conscience gave her no trouble; it had never been more friendly. Her husband and she had come to an understanding; they were in truth more than quits. There was to be no divorce — and no scandal. She would be very prudent. A man's face rose before her that was not the face of her husband, and she smiled — indulgently. Yes, life would be interesting when she returned to town. She had taken a

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house in Chester Square from the New Year; and Tom was going to Teheran. Meanwhile, she was passing the time.

A thought suddenly occurred to her. Yes, it was quite possible — probable even — that she might find Roger at the meet! The place appointed was a long way from Heston, but in the old days he had often sent on a fresh horse by train to a local station. They had had many a run together over the fields now coming into sight. Though certainly if he imagined there were the very smallest chance of finding her there, he would give this particular meet a wide berth.

Chloe laughed aloud. His resistance — and his weakness — were both so amusing. She thought of the skill — the peremptory smiling skill — with which she had beguiled him into the garden, on the day when the young couple paid their first call at Upcott. First, the low-spoken words at the back of the drawing-room, while Mrs. Barnes and the Duchess were skirmishing —

'I *must* speak to you. Something that concerns another person — something urgent.'

Whereupon, unwilling and rather stern compliance on the man's part — the handsome face darkened with most unnecessary frowns. And in the garden, the short colloquy between them — 'Of course, I see — you have n't forgiven me! Never mind! I am doing this for some one else — it 's a duty.' Then abruptly — 'You still have three of my letters.'

Amusing again — his shock of surprise, his blundering denials! He always was the most unmethodical and unbusinesslike of mortals — poor Roger! She

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heard her own voice in reply. 'Oh yes, you have. I don't make mistakes about such things. Do you remember the letter in which I told you about that affair of Theresa Weightman?'

A stare — an astonished admission. Precisely!

'Well, she 's in great trouble. Her husband threatens absurdities. She has always confided in me — she trusts me, and I can't have that letter wandering about the world.'

'I certainly sent it back!'

'No — you never sent it back. You have three of mine. And you know how careless you are — how you leave things about. I was always on tenterhooks. Look again, *please!* You must have some idea where they might be.'

Perplexity — annoyance!

'When we sold the London house, all papers and documents were sent down here. We reserved a room — which was locked up.'

'*A la bonne heure!* Of course — there they are.'

But all the same — great unwillingness to search. It was most unlikely he would be able to find anything — most unlikely there was anything to find. He was sure he had sent back everything. And then a look in the fine hazel eyes — like a horse putting back its ears.

All of no avail — against the laughing persistence which insisted on the letters. 'But I must have them — I really must! It is a horrid tragedy, and I told you everything — things I had no business to tell you at all.'

On which, at last, a grudging consent to look, fol-

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lowed by a marked determination to go back to the drawing-room. . . .

But it was the second *tête-à-tête* that was really adroit! After tea — just a touch on the arm — while the Duchess was showing the Nattiers to Mrs. Barnes, and Lelius was holding the lamp. 'One moment more! — in the conservatory. I have a few things to add.' And in that second little interview — about nothing, in truth — a mere piece of audacity — the lion's claws had been a good deal pared. He had been made to look at her, first and foremost; to realise that she was not afraid of him — not one bit! — and that he would have to treat her decently. Poor Roger! In a few years the girl he had married would be a plain and prickly little pedant — ill-bred besides — and he knew it.

As to more recent adventures. If people meet in society, they must be civil; and if old friends meet at a dance, there is an institution known as 'sitting out'; and 'sitting out' is nothing if not conversational; and conversation — between old friends and cousins — is beguiling, and may be lengthy.

The ball at Brendon House — Chloe still felt the triumph of it in her veins — still saw the softening in Roger's handsome face, the look of lazy pleasure, and the disapproval — or was it the envy? — in the eyes of certain county magnates looking on. Since then, no communication between Heston and Upcott.

Mrs. Fairmile was now a couple of miles from the meet. She had struck into a great belt of plantations bounding one side of the ducal estate. Through it ran a famous green ride, crossed near its beginning by a

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main road. On her right, beyond the thick screen of trees, was the railway, and she could hear the occasional rush of a train.

When she reached the cross road, which led from a station, a labourer opened the plantation gates for her. As he unlatched the second, she perceived a man's figure in front of her.

'Roger!'

A touch of the whip — her horse sprang forward. The man in front looked back startled; but she was already beside him.

'You keep up the old habit, like me? What a lovely day!'

Roger Barnes, after a flush of amazement and surprise, greeted her coldly: 'It is a long way for you to come,' he said formally. 'Twelve miles, is n't it? You 're not going to hunt? '

'Oh, no! I only came to look at the hounds and the horses — to remind myself of all the good old times. You don't want to remember them, I know. Life 's gone on for you!'

Roger bent forward to pat the neck of his horse. 'It goes on for all of us,' he said gruffly.

'Ah, well!' She sighed. He looked up and their eyes met. The wind had slightly reddened her pale skin: her expression was one of great animation, yet of great softness. The grace of the long, slender body in the close-fitting habit; of the beautiful head and loosened hair under the small, low-crowned beaver hat; the slender hand upon the reins — all these various impressions rushed upon Barnes at once, bringing with them the fascination of a past happiness, provoking,

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by contrast, the memory of a harassing and irritating present.

'Is Heston getting on?' asked Mrs. Fairmile, smiling.

He frowned involuntarily.

'Oh, I suppose we shall be straight some day'; the tone, however, belied the words. 'When once the British workman gets in, it 's the deuce to get him out.'

'The old house had such a charm!' said Chloe softly.

Roger made no reply. He rode stiffly beside her, looking straight before him. Chloe, observing him without appearing to do anything of the kind, asked herself whether the Apollo radiance of him were not already somewhat quenched and shorn. A slight thickening of feature — a slight coarsening of form — she thought she perceived them. Poor Roger! — had he been living too well and idling too flagrantly on these American dollars?

Suddenly she bent over and laid a gloved hand on his arm.

'Had n't it? ' she said, in a low voice.

He started. But he neither looked at her nor shook her off.

'What — the house?' was the ungracious reply. 'I 'm sure I don't know; I never thought about it — whether it was pretty or ugly, I mean. It suited us, and it amused mother to fiddle about with it.'

Mrs. Fairmile withdrew her hand.

'Of course a great deal of it was ugly,' she said composedly. 'Dear Lady Barnes really did n't know. But then we led such a jolly life in it — *we* made it!'

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She looked at him brightly, only to see in him an angry flash of expression. He turned and faced her.

'I 'm glad you think it was jolly. My remembrances are not quite so pleasant.'

She laughed a little — not flinching at all — her face rosy to his challenge.

'Oh, yes, they are — or should be. What 's the use of blackening the past because it could n't be the present. My dear Roger, if I had n't — well, let 's talk plainly! — if I had n't thrown you over, where would you be now? We should be living in West Kensington, and I should be taking boarders — or — no! — a country-house, perhaps, with paying guests. You would be teaching the cockney idea how to shoot, at half a guinea a day, and I should be buying my clothes secondhand through the *Exchange and Mart*. Whereas — whereas —'

She bent forward again.

'You are a very rich man — you have a charming wife — a dear little girl — you can get into Parliament — travel, speculate, race, anything you please. And I did it all!'

'I don't agree with you,' he said dryly. She laughed again.

'Well, we can't argue it — can we? I only wanted to point out to you the plain, bare truth, that there is nothing in the world to prevent our being excellent friends again — *now*. But first — and once more — *my letters!*'

Her tone was a little peremptory, and Roger's face clouded.

'I found two of them last night, by the merest chance

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— in an old dispatch-box I took to America. They were posted to you on the way here.'

'Good! But there were three.'

'I know — so you said. I could only find two.'

'Was the particular letter I mentioned one of them?'

He answered unwillingly.

'No. I searched everywhere. I don't believe I have it.'

She shook her head with decision.

'You certainly have it. Please look again.'

He broke out with some irritation, insisting that if it had not been returned it had been either lost or destroyed. It could matter to no one.

Some snaring, entangling instinct — an instinct of the hunter — made her persist. She must have it. It was a point of honour. 'Poor Theresa is so unhappy, so pursued! You saw that odious paragraph last week? I can't run the risk!'

With a groan of annoyance, he promised at last that he would look again. Then the sparkling eyes changed, the voice softened.

She praised — she rewarded him. By smooth transitions she slipped into ordinary talk; of his candidature for the County Council — the points of the great horse he rode — the gossip of the neighbourhood — the charms of Beatty.

And on this last topic he, too, suddenly found his tongue. The cloud — of awkwardness, or of something else not to be analysed — broke away, and he began to talk, and presently to ask questions, with readiness, even with eagerness.

Was it right to be so very strict with children? —

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babies under three? Was n't it ridiculous to expect them not to be naughty or greedy? Why, every child wanted as much sweetstuff as it could tuck in! Quite right too — doctors said it was good for them. But Miss Farmer—

'Who is Miss Farmer?' inquired Mrs. Fairmile. She was riding close beside him — an embodied friendliness — a soft and womanly Chloe, very different from the old.

'She 's the nurse; my mother found her. She 's a lady — by way of — she does n't do any rough work — and I dare say she 's the newest thing out. But she 's too tight a hand for my taste. I say! — what do you think of this! She would n't let Beatty come down to the drawing-room yesterday, because she cried for a sweet! Was n't that *devilish!*' He brought his hand down fiercely on his thigh.

'A Gorgon!' said Mrs. Fairmile, raising her eyebrows. 'Any other qualifications? French? German?'

'Not a word. Not she! Her people live somewhere near here, I believe.' Roger looked vaguely round him. 'Her father managed a brick-field on this estate — some parson or other recommended her to mother.'

'And you don't like her?'

'Well, no — I don't! She 's not the kind of woman *I* want.' He blurted it out, adding hurriedly, 'But my wife thinks a lot of her.'

Chloe dismissed the topic of the nurse, but still let him run on about the child. Amazing! — this development of paternity in the careless, handsome youth of three years before. She was amused and bored by it. But her permission of it had thawed him — that she saw.

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Presently, from the child she led him on to common acquaintance — old friends — and talk flowed fast. She made him laugh; and the furrows in the young brow disappeared. Now as always they understood each other at a word; there was between them the freemasonry of persons sprung from the same world and the same tradition; his daily talk with Daphne had never this easy, slipping pleasure. Meanwhile the horses sauntered on, unconsciously held back; and the magical autumn wood, its lights and lines and odours, played upon their senses.

At last Roger with a start perceived a gate in front. He looked at his watch, and she saw him redden.

'We shall be late for the meet.'

His eyes avoided hers. He gathered up the reins, evidently conscious.

Smiling, she let him open the gate for her, and then as they passed into the road, shadowed with overarching trees, she reined in Whitefoot, and bending forward, held out her hand. 'Good-bye!'

'You're not coming?'

'I think I've had enough. I'll go home. Good-bye.'

It was a relief. In both minds had risen the image of their arrival together — amid the crowd of the meet. As he looked at her — gratefully — the grace of her movement, the temptation of her eyes, the rush of old memories suddenly turned his head. He gripped her hand hard for a minute, staring at her.

The road in front of them was quite empty. But fifty yards behind them was a small red-brick house buried in trees. As they still paused, hand in hand, in

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front of the gate into the wood, which had failed to swing back and remained half open, the garden door of this house unclosed and a young woman in a kind of uniform stepped into the road. She perceived the two riders — stopped in astonishment — observed them unseen, and walked quickly away in the direction of the station.

Roger reached Heston that night only just in time to dress for dinner.

By this time he was in a wholly different mood; angry with himself, and full of rueful thought about his wife. Daphne and he had been getting on anything but well for some time past. He knew that he had several times behaved badly; why, indeed, that very afternoon, had he held Chloe Fairmile's hand in the public road, like an idiot? Suppose any one had passed? It was only Daphne's tempers and the discomfort at home that made an hour with Chloe so pleasant — and brought the old recollections back. He vowed he never thought of her, except when she was there to make a fool of him — or plague him about those beastly letters. Whereas Daphne — Daphne was always in his mind, and this eclipse into which their daily life had passed. He seemed to be always tripping and stumbling, like a lame man among loose stones; doing or saying what he did not mean to do or say, and tongue-tied when he should have spoken. Daphne's jealousy made him ridiculous; he resented it hotly; yet he knew he was not altogether blameless.

If only something could be done to make Daphne like Heston and the neighbours! But he saw plainly enough that in spite of all the effort and money she

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was pouring out upon the house, it gave her very little pleasure in return. Her heart was not in it. And as for the neighbours, she had scarcely a good word now for any of them. Jolly! — just as he was going to stand for the County Council, with an idea of Parliament later on! And as for what *he* wished — what would be good for *him* — that she never seemed to think of. And, really, some of the things she said now and then about money — nobody with the spirit of a mouse could stand them.

To comfort his worries he went first of all to the nursery, where he found the nursery-maid in charge, and the child already asleep. Miss Farmer, it appeared, had been enjoying a "day off," and was not expected back till late. He knelt down beside the little girl, feeding his eyes upon her. She lay with her delicate face pressed into the pillow, the small neck visible under the cloud of hair, one hand, the soft palm uppermost, on the sheet. He bent down and kissed the hand, glad that the sharp-faced nurse was not there to see. The touch of the fragrant skin thrilled him with pride and joy; so did the lovely defencelessness of the child's sleep. That such a possession should have been given to him, to guard and cherish! There was in his mind a passionate vow to guard the little thing — aye, with his life-blood; and then a movement of laughter at his own heroics. Well! — Daphne might give him sons — but he did not suppose any other child could ever be quite the same to him as Beatty. He sat in a contented silence, feeding his eyes upon her, as the soft breath rose and fell. And as he did so, his temper softened and warmed toward Beatty's mother.

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A little later he found Daphne in her room, already dressed for dinner. He approached her uneasily.

'How tired you look, Daphne! What have you been doing to yourself?'

Daphne stiffly pointed out that she had been standing over the workmen all day, there being no one else to stand over them, and of course she was tired. Her manner would have provoked him but for the visiting of an inward compunction. Instead of showing annoyance he bent down and kissed her.

'I'll stay and help to-morrow, if you want me, though you know I'm no good. I say, how much more are you going to do to the house?'

Daphne looked at him coldly. She had not returned the kiss. 'Of course, I know that you don't appreciate in the least what I am doing!'

Roger thrust his hands into his pockets, and walked up and down uncomfortably. He thought, in fact, that Daphne was spoiling the dear nondescript old place, and he knew that the neighbourhood thought so too. Also he particularly disliked the young architect who was superintending the works ("a priggish ass," who gave himself abominable airs — except to Daphne, whom he slavishly obeyed, and to Miss Farmer, with whom Roger had twice caught him gossiping). But he was determined not to anger his wife, and he held his tongue.

'I wish, anyway, you would n't stick at it so closely,' he said discontentedly. 'Let's go abroad somewhere for Christmas — Nice, or Monte Carlo. I am sure you want a change.'

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'Well, it is n't exactly an enchanting neighbourhood,' said Daphne, with pinched lips.

'I'm awfully sorry you don't like the people here,' said Roger, perplexed. 'I dare say they're all stupid.'

'That would n't matter — if they behaved decently,' said Daphne, flushing.

'I suppose that means — if I behaved decently!' cried Roger, turning upon her.

Daphne faced him, her head in air, her small foot beating the ground, in a trick it had.

'Well, I'm not likely to forget the Brendon ball, am I?'

Roger's look changed.

'I meant no harm, and you know I did n't,' he said sulkily.

'Oh, no, you only made a laughing-stock of *me!*' Daphne turned on her heel. Suddenly she felt herself roughly caught in Roger's arms.

'Daphne, what *is* the matter? Why can't we be happy together?'

'Ask yourself,' she said, trying to extricate herself, and not succeeding. 'I don't like the people here, and they don't like me. But as you seem to enjoy flirting with Mrs. Fairmile, there's one person satisfied.'

Roger laughed — not agreeably. 'I shall soon think, Daphne, that somebody's "put a spell on you," as my old nurse used to say. I wish I knew what I could do to break it.'

She lay passive in his arms a moment, and then he felt a shiver run through her, and saw that she was crying. He held her close to him, kissing and comfort-

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ing her, while his own eyes were wet. What her emotion meant, or his own, he could not have told clearly; but it was a moment for both of healing, of impulsive return, the one to the other, unspoken penitence on her side, a hidden self-blame on his. She clung to him fiercely, courting the pressure of his arms, the warm contact of his youth; while, in his inner mind, he renounced with energy the temptress Chloe and all her works, vowing to himself that he would give Daphne no cause, no pretext even, for jealousy, and would bear it patiently if she were still unjust and tormenting.

'Where have you been all day?' said Daphne at last, disengaging herself, and brushing the tears away from her eyes — a little angrily, as though she were ashamed of them.

'I told you this morning. I had a run with the Stoneshire hounds.'

'Whom did you meet there?'

'Oh, various old acquaintances. Nobody amusing.' He gave two or three names, his conscience pricking him. Somehow, at that moment, it seemed impossible to mention Chloe Fairmile.

About eleven o'clock that night, Daphne and Lady Barnes having just gone upstairs, Roger and a local Colonel of Volunteers who was dining and spending the night at Heston, were in the smoking-room. Colonel Williams had come over to discuss Volunteer prospects in the neighbourhood, and had been delighted to find in the grandson of his old friend, Oliver Trescoe, — a young fellow whom he and others had too readily regarded as given over to luxury and soft living —

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signs of the old public spirit, the traditional manliness of the family. The two men were talking with great cordiality, when the sound of a dogcart driving up to the front door disturbed them.

'Who on earth — at this time of night?' said Roger.

The butler, entering with fresh cigarettes, explained that Miss Farmer had only just returned, having missed an earlier train.

'Well, I hope to goodness she won't go and disturb Miss Beatty,' grumbled Roger; and then, half to himself, half to his companion, as the butler departed — 'I don't believe she missed her train; she's one of the cool sort — does jolly well what she likes! I say, Colonel, do you like "lady helps"? I don't!'

Half an hour later, Roger, having said good-night to his guest ten minutes before, was mounting the stairs on his own way to bed, when he heard in the distance the sound of a closing door and the rustle of a woman's dress.

Nurse Farmer, he supposed, who had been gossiping with Daphne. His face, as the candle shone upon it, expressed annoyance. Vaguely, he resented the kind of intimacy which had grown up lately between Daphne and her child's nurse. She was not the kind of person to make a friend of; she bullied Beatty; and she must be got rid of.

Yet, when he entered his wife's room, everything was dark, and Daphne was apparently sound asleep. Her face was hidden from him; and he moved on tiptoe so as not to disturb her. Evidently it was not she who had been gossiping late. His mother, perhaps, with her maid.

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CHAPTER VIII

In the course of that night Roger Barnes's fate was decided, while he lay, happily sleeping, beside his wife. Daphne, as soon as she heard his regular breathing, opened the eyes she had only pretended to close, and lay staring into the shadows of the room, in which a nightlight was burning. Presently she got up softly, put on a dressing-gown, and went to the fire, which she noiselessly replenished; drawing up a chair, she sank back into it, her arms folded. The strengthening firelight showed her small white face, amid the masses of her dark hair.

Her whole being was seething with passionate and revengeful thought. It was as though with violent straining and wrenching the familiar links and bulwarks of life were breaking down, and as if amid the wreck of them she found herself looking at goblin faces beyond, growing gradually used to them, ceasing to be startled by them, finding in them even a wild attraction and invitation.

So Roger had lied to her. Instead of a casual ride, involving a meeting with a few old acquaintances, as he had represented to her, he had been engaged that day in an assignation with Mrs. Fairmile, arranged beforehand, and carefully concealed from his wife. Miss Farmer had seen them coming out of a wood together hand in hand! In the public road, this! — not even so much respect for appearances as might have

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dictated the most elementary reticence and decency. The case was so clear that it sickened her; she shivered with cold and nausea as she lay there by the now glowing fire which yet gave her no physical comfort. Probably in the past their relation had gone much farther than Roger had ever confessed to his wife. Mrs. Fairmile was a woman who would stick at nothing. And if Daphne were not already betrayed, she could no longer protect herself. The issue was certain. Such women as Chloe Fairmile are not to be baulked of what they desire. Good women cannot fight them on equal terms. And as to any attempt to keep the affections of a husband who could behave in such a way to the wife who had given him her youth, herself, and all the resources and facilities of life, Daphne's whole being stiffened into mingled anguish and scorn as she renounced the contest. Knowing himself the traitor that he was, he could yet hold her, kiss her, murmur tender things to her, allow her to cry upon his breast, to stammer repentance and humbleness. Cowardly! False! Treacherous! She flung out her hands, rigid, before her in the darkness, as though for ever putting him away.

Anguish? Yes! — but not of such torturing quality as she could have felt a year, six months even, before this date. She was astonished that she could bear her life, that she could sit there in the night stillness, motionless, holding her breath even, while Roger slept there in the shadowed bed. Had this thing happened to her before their arrival at Heston, she must have fallen upon Roger in mad grief and passion, ready to kill him or herself; must at least have poured out tor-

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rents of useless words and tears. She could not have sat dumb like this; in misery, but quite able to think things out, to envisage all the dark possibilities of the future. And not only the future. By a perfectly logical diversion her thoughts presently went racing to the past. There was, so to speak, a suspension of the immediate crisis, while she listened to her own mind — while she watched her own years go by.

It was but rarely that Daphne let her mind run on her own origins. But on this winter night, as she sat motionless by the fire, she became conscious of a sudden detachment from her most recent self and life — a sudden violent turning against both — which naturally threw her back on the past, on some reflexion upon what she had made of herself, by way of guide to what she might still make of herself, if she struck boldly, now, while there was yet time, for her own freedom and development.

As to her parents, she never confessed, even to herself, that she owed them anything, except, of course, the mere crude wealth that her father had left her. Otherwise she was vaguely ashamed of them both. And yet! — in her most vital qualities, her love of sensational effect, her scorn of half-measures, her quick, relentless imagination, her increasing ostentation and extravagance, she was the true child of the boastful mercurial Irishman who had married her Spanish mother as part of a trade bargain, on a chance visit to Buenos Ayres. For twenty years Daniel Floyd had leased and exploited, had ravaged and destroyed, great tracts of primeval forest in the northern regions of his adopted state, leaving behind him a ruined earth

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and an impoverished community, but building up the while, a colossal fortune. He had learned the arts of municipal 'bossing' in one of the minor towns of Illinois, and had then migrated to Chicago, where for years he was the life and soul of all the bolder and more adventurous corruption of the city. A jovial, handsome fellow! — with an actor's face, a bright eye, and a slippery hand. Daphne had a vivid, and, on the whole, affectionate, remembrance of her father, of whom, however, she seldom spoke. The thought of her mother, on the other hand, was always unwelcome. It brought back recollections of storm and tempest; of wild laughter, and still wilder tears; of gorgeous dresses, small feet, and jewelled fingers.

No; her parents had but small place in that dramatic autobiography that Daphne was now constructing for herself. She was not their daughter in any but the physical sense; she was the daughter of her own works and efforts.

She leant forward to the fire, her face propped in her hands, going back in thought to her father's death, when she was fifteen; to her three years of cloying convent life, and her escape from it, as well as from the intriguing relations who would have kept her there; to the clever lawyer who had helped to put her in possession of her fortune, and the huge sums she had paid him for his services; to her search for education, her hungry determination to rise in the world, the friends she had made at college, in New York, Philadelphia, Washington. She had been influenced by one *milieu* after another; she had worked hard, now at music, now at philosophy; had dabbled in girls' clubs, and

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gone to Socialist meetings, and had been all through driven on by the gadfly of an ever-increasing ambition.

Ambition for what! She looked back on this early life with a bitter contempt. What had it all come to? Marriage with Roger Barnes! — a hasty passion of which she was already ashamed, for a man who was already false to her.

What had made her marry him? She did not mince matters with herself in her reply. She had married him, influenced by a sudden gust of physical inclination — by that glamour, too, under which she had seen him in Washington, a glamour of youth and novelty. If she had seen him first in his natural environment she would have been on her guard; she would have realised what it meant to marry a man who could help her own ideals and ambitions so little. And what, really, had their married life brought her? Had she ever been *sure* of Roger? — had she ever been able to feel proud of him, in the company of really distinguished men? — had she not been conscious, again and again, when in London, or Paris, or Berlin, that he was her inferior, that he spoiled her social and intellectual chances? And his tone toward women had always been a low one; no great harm in it, perhaps; but it had often wounded and disgusted her.

And then — for climax! — his concealment of the early love affair with Chloe Fairmile; his weakness and folly in letting her regain her hold upon him; his behaviour at the Brendon ball, the gossip which, as Agnes Farmer declared, was all over the neighbourhood, ending in the last baseness — the assignation, the lies, the hypocrisy of the afternoon!

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Enough! — more than enough! What did she care what the English world thought of her? She would free and right herself in her own way, and they might hold up what hands they pleased. A passion of wounded vanity, of disappointed self-love swept through her. She had looked forward to the English country life; she had meant to play a great part in it. But three months had been enough to show her the kind of thing — the hopeless narrowness and Philistinism of these English backwaters. What did these small squires and country clergy know of the real world, the world that mattered to *her*, where people had free minds and progressive ideas? Her resentment of the *milieu* in which Roger expected her to live subtly swelled and strengthened her wrath against himself; it made the soil from which sprang a sudden growth of angry will — violent and destructive. There was in her little or none of that affinity with a traditional, a parent England, which is present in so many Americans, which emerges in them like buried land from the waters. On the contrary, the pressure of race and blood in her was not towards, but against; not friendly, but hostile. The nearer she came to the English life, the more certain forces in her, deeply infused, rose up and made their protest. The Celtic and Latin strains that were mingled in her, their natural sympathies and repulsions, which had been indistinct in the girl, overlaid by the deposits of the current American world, were becoming dominant in the woman.

Well, thank goodness, modern life is not as the old! There are ways out.

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Midnight had just struck. The night was gusty, the north-west wind made fierce attacks on the square, comfortable house. Daphne rose slowly; she moved noiselessly across the floor; she stood with her arms behind her looking down at the sleeping Roger. Then a thought struck her; she reached out a hand to the new number of an American quarterly which lay, with the paper knife in it, on a table beside the bed. She had ordered it in a mood of jealous annoyance because of a few pages of art criticism in it by Mrs. Fairmile, which impertinently professed to know more about the Vitali Signorelli than its present owner did; but she remembered also an article on 'The Future for Women,' which had seemed to her a fine, progressive thing. She turned the pages noiselessly — her eyes now on the unconscious Roger — now on the book.

'All forms of contract — in business, education, religion, or law — suffer from the weakness and blindness of the persons making them — the marriage contract as much as any other. The dictates of humanity and common-sense alike show that the latter and most important contract should no more be perpetual than any of the others.'

Again: —

'Any covenant between human beings that fails to produce or promote human happiness, cannot in the nature of things be of any force or authority; it is not only a right but a duty to abolish it.'

And a little further: —

'Womanhood is the great fact of woman's life. Wifehood and motherhood are but incidental relations.'

Daphne put down the book. In the dim light, the

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tension of her slender figure, her frowning brow, her locked arms and hands, made of her a threatening Fate hovering darkly above the man in his deep, defenceless sleep.

She was miserable, consumed with jealous anger. But the temptation of a new licence — a lawless law — was in her veins. Have women been trampled on, insulted, enslaved? — in America, at least, they may now stand on their feet. No need to cringe any more to the insolence and cruelty of men. A woman's life may be soiled and broken; but in the great human workshop of America it can be repaired. She remembered that in the majority of American divorces it is the woman who applies for relief. And why not? The average woman, when she marries, knows much less of life and the world than the average man. She is more likely — poor soul! — to make mistakes.

She drew closer to the bed. All round her glimmered the furniture and appointments of a costly room — the silver and tortoise-shell on the dressing-table, the long mirrors lining the farther wall, the silk hangings of the bed. Luxury, as light and soft as skill and money could make it — the room breathed it; and in the midst stood the young creature who had designed it, the will within her hardening rapidly to an irrevocable purpose.

Yes, she had made a mistake! But she would retrieve it. She would free herself. She would no longer put up with Roger, with his neglect and deceit — his disagreeable and ungrateful mother — his immoral friends — and this dull, soul-deadening English life.

Roger moved and murmured. She retreated a little,

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still looking at him fixedly. Was it the child's name? Perhaps. He dreamed interminably, and very often of Beatty. But it did not move her. Beatty, of course, was *her* child. Every child belongs to the mother in a far profounder sense than to the father. And he, too, would be free; he would naturally marry again.

Case after case of divorce ran through her mind as she stood there; the persons and circumstances all well known to her. Other stories also, not personally within her ken; the famous scandals of the time, much discussed throughout American society. Her wits cleared and steeled. She began to see the course that she must follow.

It would all depend upon the lawyers; and a good deal — she faced it — upon money. All sorts of technical phrases, vaguely remembered, ran through her mind. She would have to recover her American citizenship — she and the child. A domicile of six months in South Dakota, or in Wyoming — a year in Philadelphia — she began to recall information derived of old from Madeleine Verrier, who had, of course, been forced to consider all these things, and to weigh alternatives. Advice, of course, must be asked of her at once — and sympathy.

Suddenly, on her brooding, there broke a wave of excitement. Life, instead of being closed, as in a sense it is, for every married woman, was in a moment open and vague again; the doors flung wide to flaming heavens. An intoxication of recovered youth and freedom possessed her. The sleeping Roger represented things intolerable and outworn. Why should a woman of her gifts, of her opportunities, be chained for life to this

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commonplace man, now that her passion was over? — now that she knew him for what he was, weak, feather-brained, and vicious? She looked at him with a kind of exaltation, spurning him from her path.

But the immediate future! — the practical steps! What kind of evidence would she want? — what kind of witnesses? Something more, no doubt, of both than she had already. She must wait — temporise — do nothing rashly. If it was for Roger's good as well as her own that they should be free of each other — and she was fast persuading herself of this — she must, for both their sakes, manage the hateful operation without bungling.

What was the alternative? She seemed to ask it of Roger, as she stood looking down upon him. Patience? — with a man who could never sympathise with her intellectually or artistically? —the relations of married life with a husband who made assignations with an old love, under the eyes of the whole neighbourhood? — the narrowing, cramping influences of English provincial society? No! she was born for other and greater things, and she would grasp them. 'My first duty is to myself — to my own development. We have absolutely no *right* to sacrifice ourselves — as women have been taught to do for thousands of years.'

Bewildered by the rhetoric of her own thoughts, Daphne returned to her seat by the fire, and sat there wildly dreaming, till once more recalled to practical possibilities by the passage of the hours on the clock above her.

Miss Farmer? Everything, it seemed, depended on her. But Daphne had no doubts of her. Poor

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girl! — with her poverty-stricken home, her drunken father lately dismissed from his post, and her evident inclination towards this clever young fellow now employed in the house — Daphne rejoiced to think of what money could do, in this case at least; of the reward that should be waiting for the girl's devotion when the moment came; of the gifts already made, and the gratitude already evoked. No; she could be trusted; she had every reason to be true.

Some fitful sleep came to her at last in the morning hours. But when Roger awoke, she was half-way through her dressing; and when he first saw her, he noticed nothing except that she was paler than usual, and confessed to a broken night.

But as the day wore on it became plain to everybody at Heston — to Roger first and foremost — that something was much amiss. Daphne would not leave her sitting-room and her sofa; she complained of headache and over-fatigue; would have nothing to say to the men at work on the new decoration of the east wing of the house, who were clamouring for directions; and would admit nobody but Miss Farmer and her maid. Roger forced his way in once, only to be vanquished by the traditional weapons of weakness, pallor, and silence. Her face contracted and quivered as his step approached her; it was as though he trampled upon her; and he left her, awkwardly, on tiptoe, feeling himself as intrusively brutal as she clearly meant him to feel.

What on earth was the matter? Some new grievance against him, he supposed. After the softening, the quasi-reconciliation of the day before, his chagrin

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and disappointment were great. Impossible she should know anything of his ride with Chloe! There was not a soul in that wood; and the place was twenty miles from Heston. Again he felt the impulse to blurt it all out to her; but was simply repelled and intimidated by this porcupine mood in which she had wrapped herself. Better wait at least till she was a little more normal again. He went off disconsolately to a day's shooting.

Meanwhile, his own particular worry was sharp enough. Chloe had taken advantage of their casual *tête-à-tête*, as she had done before on several occasions, to claim something of the old relation, instead of accepting the new, like a decent woman; and in the face of the temptation offered him he had shown a weakness of which not only his conscience but his pride was ashamed. He realised perfectly that she had been trying during the whole autumn to recover her former hold on him, and he also saw clearly and bitterly that he was not strong enough to resist her, should he continue to be thrown with her; and not clever enough to baffle her, if her will were really set on recapturing him. He was afraid of her, and afraid of himself.

What, then, must he do? As he tramped about the wet fields and plantations with a keeper and a few beaters after some scattered pheasants, he was really, poor fellow! arguing out the riddle of his life. What would Herbert French advise him to do? — supposing he could put the question plainly to him, which of course was not possible. He meant honestly and sincerely to keep straight; to do his duty by Daphne and the child. But he was no plaster saint, and he could not afford to give Chloe Fairmile too many opportuni-

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ties. To break at once, to carry off Daphne and leave Heston, at least for a time — that was the obviously prudent and reasonable course. But in her present mood it was of no use for him to propose it, tired as she seemed to be of Heston, and disappointed in the neighbours: any plan brought forward by him was doomed beforehand. Well then, let him go himself; he had been so unhappy during the preceding weeks it would be a jolly relief to turn his back on Heston for a time.

But as soon as he had taken his departure, Chloe perhaps would take hers; and if so, Daphne's jealousy would be worse than ever. Whatever deserts he might place between himself and Mrs. Fairmile, Daphne would imagine them together.

Meanwhile, there was that Lilliput bond, that small, chafing entanglement, which Chloe had flung around him in her persistence about the letters. There was, no doubt, a horrid scandal brewing about Mrs. Weightman, Chloe's old friend — a friend of his own, too, in former days. Through Chloe's unpardonable indiscretions he knew a great deal more about this lady's affairs than he had ever wished to know. And he well remembered the letter in question; a letter on which the political life or death of one of England's most famous men might easily turn, supposing it got out. But the letter was safe enough; not the least likely to come into dangerous hands, in spite of Chloe's absurd hypotheses. It was somewhere, no doubt, among the boxes in the locked room; and who could possibly get hold of it? At the same time he realised that as long as he had not found and returned it she would still have a certain

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claim upon him, a certain right to harass him with inquiries and confidential interviews, which, as a man of honour, he could not altogether deny.

A pheasant got up across a ploughed field where in the mild season the young corn was already green. Roger shot, and missed; the bird floated gaily down the wind, and the head keeper, in disgust, muttered bad language to the underling beside him.

But after that Barnes was twice as cheerful as before. He whistled as he walked; his shooting recovered; and by the time the dark fell, keepers and beaters were once more his friends.

The fact was that just as he missed the pheasant he had taken his resolution, and seen his way. He would have another determined hunt for that letter; he would also find and destroy his own letters to Chloe — those she had returned to him — which must certainly never fall into Daphne's hands; and then he would go away to London or the North, to some place whence he could write both to Chloe Fairmile and to his wife. Women like Daphne were too quick; they could get out a dozen words to your one; but give a man time, and he could express himself. And, therewith, a great tenderness and compunction in this man's heart, and a steady determination to put things right. For was not Daphne Beatty's mother? and was he not in truth very fond of her, if only she would let him be?

Now then for the hunt. As he had never destroyed the letters, they must exist; but, in the name of mischief, where? He seemed to remember thrusting his own letters to Chloe into a desk of his schoolboy days which used to stand in his London sitting-room. Very

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likely some of hers might be there too. But the thought of his own had by now become a much greater anxiety to him than the wish to placate Chloe. For he was most uncomfortably aware that his correspondence with Chloe during their short engagement had been of a very different degree of fervour from that shown in the letters to Daphne under similar circumstances. As for the indelicacy and folly of leaving such documents to chance, he cursed it sorely.

How to look? He pondered it. He did not even know which attic it was that had been reserved at the time of the letting of Heston, and now held some of the old London furniture and papers. Well, he must manage it, 'burgle' his own house, if necessary. What an absurd situation! Should he consult his mother? No; better not.

That evening General Hobson was expected for a couple of nights. On going up to dress for dinner, Roger discovered that he had been banished to a room on the farther side of the house, where his servant was now putting out his clothes. He turned very white, and went straight to his wife.

Daphne was on the sofa as before, and received him in silence.

'What's the meaning of this, Daphne?' The tone was quiet, but the breathing quick.

She looked at him — bracing herself.

'I must be alone! I had no sleep last night.'

'You had neuralgia?'

'I don't know — I had no sleep. I must be alone.'

His eyes and hers met.

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'For to-night, then,' he said briefly. 'I don't know what's the matter with you, Daphne, and I suppose it's no use to ask you. I thought, yesterday — but — however, there's no time to talk now. Are you coming down to dinner?'

'Not to dinner. I will come down for an hour afterwards.'

He went away, and before he had reached his own room, and while the heat of his sudden passion still possessed him, it occurred to him that Daphne's behaviour might after all prove a godsend. That night he would make his search, with no risk of disturbing his wife.

The dinner in the newly decorated dining-room went heavily. Lady Barnes had grown of late more and more anxious and depressed. She had long ceased to assert herself in Daphne's presence, and one saw her as the British matron in adversity, buffeted by forces she did not understand; or as some minor despot snuffed out by a stronger.

The General, who had only arrived just in time to dress, inquired in astonishment for Daphne, and was told by Roger that his wife was not well, but would come down for a little while after dinner. In presence of the new splendours of Heston, the General had — in Roger's company — very little to say. He made the vague remark that the dining-room was 'very fine,' but he should not have known it again. Where was the portrait of Edward, and the full-length of Edward's father by Sir Francis Grant? Lady Barnes drew herself up, and said nothing. Roger hastily replied that

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he believed they were now in the passage leading to the billiard-room.

'What! that dark corner!' cried the General, looking with both distaste and hostility at the famous Signorelli — a full-length nude St. Sebastian, bound and pierced — which had replaced them on the dining-room wall. Who on earth ever saw such a picture in a dining-room? Roger must be a fool to allow it!

Afterwards the General and Lady Barnes wandered through the transformed house, in general agreement as to the ugliness and extravagance of almost everything that had been done, an agreement that was as balm to the harassed spirits of the lady.

'What have they spent?' asked the General, under his breath, as they returned to the drawing-room — 'thousands and thousands, I should think! And there was no need for them to spend a penny. It is a sinful waste, and no one should waste money in these days — there are too many unemployed!' He drew up his spare person, with a terrier-like shake of the head and shoulders, as of one repudiating Mammon and all its works.

'Daphne has simply no idea of the value of money!' Lady Barnes complained, also under her breath. They were passing along one of the side corridors of the house, and there was no one in sight. But Roger's mother was evidently uneasy, as though Daphne might at any moment spring from the floor, or emerge from the walls. The General was really sorry for her.

'It's like all the rest of them — Americans, I mean,' he declared; 'they have n't our sense of responsibility. I saw plenty of that in the States.'

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Lady Barnes acquiesced. She was always soothed by the General's unfaltering views of British superiority.

They found Daphne in the drawing-room — a ghostly Daphne, in white, and covered with diamonds. She made a little perfunctory conversation with them, avoided all mention of the house, and presently, complaining again of headache, went back to her room after barely an hour downstairs.

The General whistled to himself, as he also retired to bed, after another and more private conversation with Lady Barnes, and half an hour's billiards with a very absent-minded host. By Jove, Laura wanted a change! He rejoiced that he was to escort her on the morrow to the London house of some cheerful and hospitable relations. Dollars, it seemed, were not everything, and he wished to heaven that Roger had been content to marry some plain English girl, with, say, a couple of thousand a year. Even the frugal General did not see how it could have been done on less. Roger no doubt had been a lazy, self-indulgent beggar. Yet he seemed a good deal steadier, and more sensible than he used to be; in spite of his wife, and the pouring out of dollars. And there was no doubt that he had grown perceptibly older. The General felt a vague pang of regret, so rare and so compelling had been the quality of Roger's early youth, measured at least by physical standards.

The house sank into sleep and silence. Roger, before saying good-night to his mother, had let fall a casual question as to the whereabouts of the room

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which still contained the *débris* of the London house. He must, he said, look up two or three things, some share certificates of his father's, for instance, that he had been in want of for some time. Lady Barnes directed him. At the end of the nursery wing, to the right. But in the morning one of the housemaids would show him. Had she the key? She produced it, thought no more of it, and went to bed.

He waited in his room till after midnight, then took off his shoes, his pride smarting, and emerged. There was one electric light burning in the hall below. This gave enough glimmer on the broad open landing for him to grope his way by, and he went noiselessly toward the staircase leading up to Beatty's rooms. Once, just as he reached it, he thought he caught the faint noise of low talking somewhere in the house, an indeterminate sound not to be located. But when he paused to listen, it had ceased and he supposed it to be only a windy murmur of the night.

He gained the nursery wing. So far, of course, the way was perfectly familiar. He rarely passed an evening without going to kiss Beatty in her cot. Outside the door of the night-nursery he waited a moment to listen. Was she snoozling among her blankets? — the darling! She still sucked her thumb, sometimes, poor baby, to send her to sleep, and it was another reason for discontent with Miss Farmer that she would make a misdemeanour of it. Really, that woman got on his nerves!

Beyond the nursery he had no knowledge whatever of his own house. The attics at Heston were large and rambling. He believed the servants were all in the

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other wing, but was not sure; he could only hope that he might not stumble on some handmaiden's room by mistake!

A door to the right, at the end of the passage. He tried the key. Thank goodness! It turned without too much noise, and he found himself on the threshold of a big lumber-room, his candle throwing lines of dusty light across it. He closed the door, set down the light, and looked round him in despair. The room was crowded with furniture, trunks, and boxes, in considerable confusion. It looked as though the men employed to move them had piled them there as they pleased; and Roger shrewdly suspected that his mother, from whom, in spite of her square and businesslike appearance, his own indolence was inherited, had shrunk till now from the task of disturbing them.

He began to rummage a little. Papers belonging to his father — an endless series of them; some in tin boxes marked with the names of various companies, mining and other; some in leather cases, reminiscent of politics, and labelled 'Parliamentary' or 'Local Government Board.' Trunks containing Court suits, yeomanry uniforms, and the like; a medley of old account books, photographs, worthless volumes, and broken ornaments: all the refuse that our too complex life piles about us was represented in the chaos of the room. Roger pulled and pushed as cautiously as he could, but making, inevitably, some noise in the process. At last! He caught sight of some belongings of his own and was soon joyfully detaching the old Eton desk, of which he was in search, from a pile of miscellaneous rubbish. In doing so, to his dismay, he upset

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a couple of old cardboard boxes filled with letters, and they fell with some clatter. He looked round instinctively at the door; but it was shut, and the house was built, the walls and ceilings, reasonably sound-proof. The desk was only latched — beastly carelessness, of course! — and inside it were three thick piles of letters, and a few loose ones below. His own letters to Chloe; and — by George! — the lost one! — among the others. He opened it eagerly, ran it through. Yes, the very thing! What luck! He laid it carefully aside a moment on a trunk near by, and sat with the others on his lap.

His fingers played with them. He almost determined to take them down unopened, and burn them, as they were, in his own room; but in the end he could not resist the temptation to look at them once more. He pulled off an india-rubber band from the latest packet, and was soon deep in them, at first half ashamed, half contemptuous. Calf love, of course! And he had been a precious fool to write such things. Then, presently, the headlong passion of them began to affect him, to set his pulses swinging. He fell to wondering at his own bygone facility, his own powers of expression. How did he ever write such a style! He, who could hardly get through a note now without blots and labour. Self-pity grew upon him, and self-admiration. By heaven! How could a woman treat a man — a man who could write to her like this — as Chloe had treated him!

The old smart revived; or rather, the old indelible impressions of it left on nerve and brain.

The letters lay on his knee. He sat brooding: his hands upon the packets, his head bowed. One might

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have thought him a man overcome and dissolved by the enervating memories of passion; but in truth, he was gradually and steadily reacting against them; resuming, and this time finally, as far as Chloe Fairmile was concerned, a man's mastery of himself. He thought of her unkindness and cruelty — of the misery he had suffered — and now of the reckless caprice with which, during the preceding weeks, she had tried to entangle him afresh, with no respect for his married life, for his own or Daphne's peace of mind.

He judged her, and therewith, himself. Looking back upon the four years since Chloe Fairmile had thrown him over, it seemed to him that, in some ways, he had made a good job of his life, and, in others, a bad one. As to the money, that was neither here nor there. It had been amusing to have so much of it; though of late Daphne's constant reminders that the fortune was hers and not his, had been like grit in the mouth. But he did not find that boundless wealth had made as much difference to him as he had expected. On the other hand, he had been much happier with Daphne than he had ever thought he should be, up to the time of their coming to Heston. She was n't easy to live with, and she had been often, before now, ridiculously jealous; but you could not, apparently, live with a woman without getting very fond of her — he could n't — especially if she had given you a child; and if Daphne had turned against him now, for a bit — well, he could not swear to himself that he had been free from blame; and it perhaps served him right for having gone out deliberately to the States to marry money — with a wife thrown in — in that shabby sort of way.

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But, now, to straighten out this coil; to shake himself finally free of Chloe, and make Daphne happy again! He vowed to himself that he could and would make her happy — just as she had been in their early days together. The memory of her lying white and exhausted after child-birth, with the little dark head beside her, came across him, and melted him; he thought of her with longing and tenderness.

With a deep breath he raised himself on his seat; in the old Greek phrase, 'the Gods breathed courage into his soul'; and as he stretched out an indifferent hand toward Chloe's letters on the trunk, Roger Barnes had perhaps reached the highest point of his moral history; he had become conscious of himself as a moral being choosing good or evil; and he had chosen good. It was not so much that his conscience accused him greatly with regard to Chloe. For that his normal standards were not fine enough. It was rather a kind of 'serious call,' something akin to conversion, or that might have been conversion, which befell him in this dusty room, amid the night-silence.

As he took up Chloe's letters he did not notice that the door had quietly opened behind him, and that a figure stood on the threshold.

A voice struck into the stillness.

'Roger!'

He turned with a movement that scattered all his own letters on the floor. Daphne stood before him — but with the eyes of a mad woman. Her hand shook on the handle of the door.

'What are you doing here?' She flung out the question like a blow.

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'Hallo, Daphne! — is that you?' He tried to laugh.

'I'm only looking up some old papers; no joke, in all this rubbish.' He pointed to it.

'What old papers?'

'Well, you need n't catechise me!' he said, nettled by her tone, 'or not in that way, at any rate. I could n't sleep, and I came up here to look for something I wanted. Why did you shut your door on me?'

He looked at her intently, his lips twitching a little. Daphne came nearer.

'It must be something you want very badly — something you don't want other people to see — something you're ashamed of! — or you would n't be searching for it at this time of night.' She raised her eyes, still with the same strange yet flaming quiet, from the littered floor to his face. Then suddenly glancing again at the scattered papers — 'That's your handwriting! — they're your letters! letters to Mrs. Fairmile!'

'Well, and what do you make of that?' cried Roger, half wroth, half inclined to laugh. 'If you want to know, they are the letters I wrote to Chloe Fairmile; and I, like a careless beast, never destroyed them, and they were stuffed away here. I have long meant to get at them and burn them, and as you turned me out to-night —'

'What is that letter in your hand?' exclaimed Daphne interrupting him.

'Oh, that has nothing to do with you — or me —' he said, hastily making a movement to put it in his coat pocket. But in a second, Daphne, with a cry, had thrown herself upon him, to his intense amazement,

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wrestling with him, in a wild excitement. And as she did so, a thin woman, with frightened eyes, in a nurse's dress, came quickly into the room, as though Daphne's cry had signalled to her. She was behind Roger, and he was not aware of her approach.

'Daphne, don't be such a little fool!' he said indignantly, holding her off with one hand, determined not to give her the letter.

Then, all in a moment — without, as it seemed to him, any but the mildest defensive action on his part — Daphne stumbled and fell.

'Daphne! — I say! —'

He was stooping over her in great distress to lift her up, when he felt himself vehemently put aside by a woman's hand.

'You ought to be ashamed of yourself, sir! Let me go to her.'

He turned in bewilderment. 'Miss Farmer! What on earth are you doing here?'

But in his astonishment he had given way to her, and he fell back pale and frowning, while, without replying, she lifted Daphne — who had a cut on her forehead and was half fainting — from the ground.

'Don't come near her, sir!' said the nurse, again warding him off. 'You have done quite enough. Let me attend to her.'

'You imagine that was my doing?' said Roger grimly. 'Let me assure you it was nothing of the kind. And pray, were you listening at the door?'

Miss Farmer vouchsafed no reply. She was half leading, half supporting Daphne, who leant against

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her. As they neared the door, Roger, who had been standing dumb again, started forward.

'Let me take her,' he said sternly. 'Daphne! — send this woman away.'

But Daphne only shuddered, and putting out a shaking hand, she waved him from her.

'You see in what a state she is!' cried Miss Farmer, with a withering look. 'If you must speak to her, put it off, sir, at least till to-morrow.'

Roger drew back. A strange sense of inexplicable disaster rushed upon him. He sombrely watched them pass through the door and disappear.

Daphne reached her own room. As the door closed upon them she turned to her companion, holding out the handkerchief stained with blood she had been pressing to her temple.

'You saw it all?' she said imperiously — 'the whole thing?'

'All,' said Miss Farmer. 'It's a mercy you're not more hurt.'

Daphne gave a hysterical laugh.

'It'll just do — I think it'll do! But you'll have to make a good deal out of it.'

And sinking down by the fire, she burst into a passion of wild tears.

The nurse brought her sal volatile, and washed the small cut above her eyebrow.

'It was lucky we heard him,' she said triumphantly. 'I guessed at once he must be looking for something — I knew that room was full of papers.'

A knock at the door startled them.

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'Never mind.' The nurse hurried across the room. 'It's locked.'

'How is my wife?' said Roger's strong, and as it seemed, threatening voice outside.

'She'll be all right, sir, I hope, if you'll leave her to rest. But I won't answer for the consequences if she's disturbed any more.'

There was a pause, as though of hesitation. Then Roger's step receded.

Daphne pushed her hair back from her face, and sat staring into the fire. Everything was decided now. Yet she had rushed upstairs on Miss Farmer's information with no definite purpose. She only knew that — once again — Roger was hiding something from her — doing something secret and disgraceful — and she suddenly resolved to surprise and confront him. With a mind still vaguely running on the legal aspects of what she meant to do, she had bade the nurse follow her. The rest had been half spontaneous, half acting. It had struck her imagination midway how the incident could be turned — and used.

She was triumphant; but from sheer excitement she wept and sobbed through the greater part of the night.

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PART III

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CHAPTER IX

It was a cheerless February day, dark and slaty overhead, dusty below. In the East End streets paper and straw, children's curls, girls' pinafores and women's skirts were driven back and forward by a bitter wind; there was an ugly light on ugly houses, with none of that kind trickery of mist or smoke which can lend some grace on normal days even to Commercial Street, or to the network of lanes north of the Bethnel Green Road. The pitiless wind swept the streets — swept the children and the grown-ups out of them into the houses, or any available shelter; and in the dark and chilly emptiness of the side roads one might listen in fancy for the stealthy returning steps of spirits crueller than Cold, more tyrannous than Poverty, coming to seize upon their own.

In one of these side streets stood a house larger than its neighbours, in a bit of front garden, with some decrepit rust-bitten railings between it and the road. It was an old dwelling overtaken by the flood of tenement houses, which spread north, south, east, and west of it. Its walls were no less grimy than its neighbours'; but its windows were outlined in cheerful white paint, firelight sparkled through its unshuttered panes, and a bright green door with a brass knocker completed its pleasant air. There were always children outside

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the Vicarage railings on winter evenings, held there by the spell of the green door and the firelight.

Inside the firelit room to the left of the front pathway, two men were standing — one of whom had just entered the house.

'My dear Penrose! — how very good of you to come. I know how frightfully busy you are.'

The man addressed put down his hat and stick, and hastily smoothed back some tumbling black hair which interfered with spectacled eyes already hampered by short sight. He was a tall, lank, powerful fellow; anyone acquainted with the West-Country would have known him for one of the swarthy, grey-eyed Cornish stock.

'I am pretty busy — but your tale, Herbert, was a startler. If I can help you — or Barnes — command me. He is coming this afternoon?'

Herbert French pointed his visitor to a chair.

'Of course. And another man — whom I met casually, in Pall Mall this morning — and had half an hour's talk with — an American naval officer — an old acquaintance of Elsie's — Captain Boyson — will join us also. I met him at Harvard before our wedding, and liked him. He has just come over with his sister for a short holiday, and I ran across him.'

'Is there any particular point in his joining us?'

Herbert French expounded. Boyson had been an old acquaintance of Mrs. Roger Barnes before her marriage. He knew a good deal about the Barnes story — 'feels, so I gathered, very strongly about it, and on the man's side; and when I told him that Roger had just arrived and was coming to take counsel

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with you and me this afternoon, he suddenly asked if he might come, too. I was rather taken aback. I told him that we were going, of course, to consider the case entirely from the English point of view. He still said, "Let me come; I may be of use to you." So I could only reply it must rest with Roger. They'll show him first into the dining-room.'

Penrose nodded. 'All right, as long as he does n't mind having his national toes trampled upon. So these are your new quarters, old fellow?'

His eyes travelled round the small book-lined room, with its shelves of poetry, history, and theology; its parish litter; its settle by the fire, on which lay a doll and a child's picture-book; back to the figure of the new vicar, who stood, pipe in hand, before the hearth, clad in a shabby serge suit, his collar alone betraying him. French's white hair showed even whiter than of old above the delicately blanched face; from his natural slenderness and smallness the East End and its life had by now stripped every superfluous ounce; yet, ethereal as his aspect was, not one element of the Meredithian trilogy — 'flesh,' 'blood,' or 'spirit' — was lacking in it.

'Yes, we've settled in,' he said quietly, as Penrose took stock.

'And you like it?'

'We do.'

The phrase was brief; nor did it seem to be going to lead to anything more expansive. Penrose smiled.

'Well, now' — he bent forward, with a professional change of tone — 'before he arrives, where precisely is this unhappy business? I gather, by the way, that

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Barnes has got practically all his legal advice from the other side, though the solicitors here have been co-operating?'

French nodded. 'I am still rather vague myself. Roger only arrived from New York the day before yesterday. His uncle, General Hobson, died a few weeks ago, and Roger came rushing home, as I understand, to see if he could make any ready money out of his inheritance. Money, in fact, seems to be his chief thought.'

'Money? What for? Mrs. Barnes's suit was surely settled long ago?'

'Oh, yes, — months ago. She got her decree and the custody of the child in July.'

'Remind me of the details. Barnes refused to plead?'

'Certainly. By the advice of the lawyers on both sides, he refused, as an Englishman, to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Court.'

'But he did what he could to stop the thing?'

'Of course. He rushed out after his wife as soon as he could trace where she had gone; and he made the most desperate attempts to alter her purpose. His letters, as far as I could make them out, were heart-rending. I very nearly went over to try and help him, but it was impossible to leave my work. Mrs. Barnes refused to see him. She was already at Sioux Falls, and had begun the residence necessary to bring her within the jurisdiction of the South Dakota Court. Roger, however, forced one or two interviews with her — most painful scenes! — but found her quite immoveable. At the same time she was much annoyed and excited by the legal line that he was advised to take;

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and there was a moment when she tried to bribe him to accept the divorce and submit to the American court.'

'To bribe him! With money?'

'No; with the child. Beatty at first was hidden away, and Roger could find no traces of her. But for a few weeks she was sent to stay with a Mrs. Verrier at Philadelphia, and Roger was allowed to see her, while Mrs. Barnes negotiated. It was a frightful dilemma! If he submitted, Mrs. Barnes promised that Beatty should go to him for two months every year; if not, and she obtained her decree, and the custody of the child, as she was quite confident of doing, he should never — as far as she could secure it — see Beatty again. He, too, foresaw that she would win her suit. He was sorely tempted; but he stood firm. Then before he could make up his mind what to do as to the child, the suit came on, Mrs. Barnes got her decree, and the custody of the little girl.'

'On the ground of "cruelty," I understand, and "indignities"?'

French nodded. His thin cheek flushed.

'And by the help of evidence that any liar could supply!'

'Who were her witnesses?'

'Beatty's nurse — one Agnes Farmer — and a young fellow who had been employed on the decorative work at Heston. There were relations between these two, and Roger tells me they have married lately, on a partnership bought by Mrs. Barnes. While the work was going on at Heston the young man used to put up at an inn in the country town, and talk scandal at the bar.'

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'Then there was some local scandal — on the subject of Barnes and Mrs. Fairmile?'

'Possibly. Scandal *pour rire!* Not a soul believed that there was anything more in it than mischief on the woman's side, and a kind of incapacity for dealing with a woman as she deserved, on the man's. Mrs. Fairmile has been an *intrigante* from her cradle. Barnes was at one time deeply in love with her. His wife became jealous of her after the marriage, and threw them together, by way of getting at the truth, and he shilly-shallied with the situation, instead of putting a prompt end to it, as of course he ought to have done. He was honestly fond of his wife the whole time, and devoted to his home and his child.'

'Well, she did n't plead, you say, anything more than "cruelty" and "indignities." The scandal, such as it was, was no doubt part of the "cruelty"?'

French assented.

'And you suspect that money played a great part in the whole transaction?'

'I don't *suspect* — the evidence goes a long way beyond that. Mrs. Barnes bought the show! I am told there are a thousand ways of doing it.'

Penrose smoked and pondered.

'Well, then —what happened? I imagine that by this time Barnes had not much affection left for his wife?'

'I don't know,' said French, hesitating. 'I believe the whole thing was a great blow to him. He was never passionately in love with her, but he was very fond of her in his own way — increasingly fond of her — up to that miserable autumn at Heston. However, after

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the decree, his one thought was for Beatty. His whole soul has been wrapped up in that child from the first moment she was put into his arms. When he first realised that his wife meant to take her from him, Boyson tells me that he seemed to lose his head. He was like a person unnerved and bewildered, not knowing how to act or where to turn. First of all, he brought an action — a writ of *habeas corpus*, I think — to recover his daughter, as an English subject. But the fact was he had put it off too long —'

'Naturally,' said Penrose, with a shrug. 'Not much hope for him — after the decree.'

'So he discovered, poor old fellow! The action was, of course, obstructed and delayed in every way, by the power of Mrs. Barnes's millions behind the scenes. His lawyers told him plainly from the beginning that he had precious little chance. And presently he found himself the object of a press campaign in some of the yellow papers — all of it paid for and engineered by his wife. He was held up as the brutal fortune-hunting Englishman, who had beguiled an American heiress to marry him, had carried her off to England to live upon her money, had then insulted her by scandalous flirtations with a lady to whom he had formerly been engaged, had shown her constant rudeness and unkindness, and had finally, in the course of a quarrel, knocked her down, inflicting shock and injury from which she had suffered ever since. Mrs. Barnes had happily freed herself from him, but he was now trying to bully her through the child — had, it was said, threatened to carry off the little girl by violence. Mrs. Barnes went in terror of him. America, however, would

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know how to protect both the mother and the child! You can imagine the kind of thing. Well, very soon Roger began to find himself a marked man in hotels, followed in the streets, persecuted by interviewers; and the stream of lies that found its way even into the respectable newspapers about him, his former life, his habits, etc., is simply incredible! Unfortunately, he gave some handle —'

French paused a moment.

'Ah!' said Penrose, 'I have heard rumours.'

French rose and began to pace the room.

'It is a matter I can hardly speak of calmly,' he said at last. 'The night after that first scene between them, the night of her fall — her pretended fall, so Roger told me — he went downstairs in his excitement and misery, and drank, one way and another, nearly a bottle of brandy, a thing he had never done in his life before. But —'

'He has often done it since?'

French raised his shoulders sadly, then added, with some emphasis. 'Don't, however, suppose the thing worse than it is. Give him a gleam of hope and happiness, and he would soon shake it off.'

'Well, what came of his action?'

'Nothing — so far. I believe he has ceased to take any interest in it. Another line of action altogether was suggested to him. About three months ago he made an attempt to kidnap the child, and was foiled. He got word that she had been taken to Charlestown, and he went there with a couple of private detectives. But Mrs. Barnes was on the alert, and when he discovered the villa in which the child had been living,

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she had been removed. It was a bitter shock and disappointment, and when he got back to New York in November, in the middle of an epidemic, he was struck down by influenza and pneumonia. It went pretty hard with him. You will be shocked by his appearance. Ecco! was there ever such a story! Do you remember, Penrose, what a magnificent creature he was that year he played for Oxford, and you and I watched his innings from the pavilion?'

There was a note of emotion in the tone which implied much. Penrose assented heartily, remarking, however, that it was a magnificence which seemed to have cost him dear, if, as no doubt was the case, it had won him his wife.

'But now, with regard to money; you say he wants money. But surely, at the time of the marriage, something was settled on him?'

'Certainly, a good deal. But from the moment she left him, and the Heston bills were paid, he has never touched a farthing of it, and never will.'

'So that the General's death was opportune? Well, it's a deplorable affair! And I wish I saw any chance of being of use.'

French looked up anxiously.

'Because you know,' the speaker reluctantly continued, 'there's nothing to be done. The thing's finished.'

'Finished?' French's manner took fire. 'And the law can do *nothing!* Society can do *nothing,* to help that man either to right himself, or to recover his child? Ah!' — he paused to listen — 'here he is!'

A cab had drawn up outside. Through the lightly

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curtained windows the two within saw a man descend from it, pay the driver, and walk up the flagged passage leading to the front door.

French hurried to greet the newcomer.

'Come in, Roger! Here's George Penrose — as I promised you. Sit down, old man. They'll bring us some tea presently.'

Roger Barnes looked round him for a moment without replying; then murmured something unintelligible, as he shook hands with Penrose, and took the chair which French pushed forward. French stood beside him with a furrowed brow.

'Well, here we are, Roger! — and if there's anything whatever in this horrible affair where an English lawyer can help you, Penrose is your man. You know, I expect, what a swell he is? A K. C. after seven years — lucky dog! — and last year he was engaged in an Anglo-American case not wholly unlike yours — Brown *v.* Brown. So I thought of him as the best person among your old friends and mine to come and give us some private informal help to-day, before you take any fresh steps — if you do take any.'

'Awfully good of you both.' The speaker, still wrapped in his fur coat, sat staring at the carpet, a hand on each of his knees. 'Awfully good of you,' he repeated vaguely.

Penrose observed the newcomer. In some ways Roger Barnes was handsomer than ever. His colour, the pink and white of his astonishing complexion, was miraculously vivid; his blue eyes were infinitely more arresting than of old; and the touch of physical weakness in his aspect, left evidently by severe illness, was

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not only not disfiguring, but a positive embellishment. He had been too ruddy in the old days, too hearty and splendid — a too obvious and supreme king of men — for our fastidious modern eyes. The grief and misfortune which had shorn some of his radiance had given a more human spell to what remained. At the same time the signs of change were by no means, all of them, easy to read, or reassuring to a friend's eye. Were they no more than physical and transient?

Penrose was just beginning on the questions which seemed to him important, when there was another ring at the front door. French got up nervously, with an anxious look at Barnes.

'Roger! I don't know whether you will allow it, but I met an American acquaintance of yours to-day, and, subject to your permission, I asked him to join our conference.'

Roger raised his head — it might have been thought, angrily.

'Who on earth —?'

'Captain Boyson?'

The young man's face changed.

'I don't mind him,' he said sombrely. 'He's an awfully good sort. He was in Philadelphia a few months ago, when I was. He knows all about me. It was he and his sister who introduced me to — my wife.'

French left the room for a moment, and returned accompanied by a fair-haired, straight-shouldered man, whom he introduced to Penrose as Captain Boyson.

Roger rose from his chair to shake hands.

'How do you do, Boyson? I've told them you

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know all about it.' He dropped back heavily into his seat.

'I thought I might possibly put in a word,' said the newcomer, glancing from Roger to his friends. 'I trust I was not impertinent? But don't let me interrupt anything that was going on.'

On a plea of chill, Boyson remained standing by the fire, warming his hands, looking down upon the other three. Penrose, who belonged to a military family, reminded himself, as he glanced at the American, of a recent distinguished book on Military Geography by a Captain Alfred Boyson. No doubt the same man. A capable face, — the face of the modern scientific soldier. It breathed alertness; but also some quality warmer and softer. If the general aspect had been shaped and moulded by an incessant travail of brain, the humanity of eye and mouth spoke dumbly to the humanity of others. The council gathered in the vicarage room felt itself strengthened.

Penrose resumed his questioning of Barnes, and the other two listened while the whole miserable story of the divorce, in its American aspects, unrolled. At first Roger showed a certain apathy and brevity; he might have been fulfilling a task in which he took but small interest; even the details of chicanery and corruption connected with the trial were told without heat; he said nothing bitter of his wife—avoided naming her, indeed, as much as possible.

But when the tale was done he threw back his head with sudden animation and looked at Boyson.

'Is that about the truth, Boyson? You know.'

'Yes, I endorse it,' said the American gravely. His

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face, thin and tanned, had flushed while Barnes was speaking.

'And you know what all their papers said of me — what *they* wished people to believe — that I was n't fit to have charge of Beatty — that I should have done her harm?'

His eyes sparkled. He looked almost threateningly at the man whom he addressed. Boyson met his gaze quietly.

'I did n't believe it.'

There was a pause. Then Roger sprang suddenly to his feet, confronting the men round him.

'Look here!' he said impatiently. 'I want some money at once — and a good lot of it.' He brought his fist down heavily on the mantelpiece. 'There's this place of my uncle's, and I'm dashed if I can get a penny out of it! I went to his solicitors this morning. They drove me mad with their red-tape nonsense. It will take some time, they say, to get a mortgage on it, and meanwhile they don't seem inclined to advance me anything, or a hundred or two, perhaps. What's that? I lost my temper, and next time I go they'll turn me out, I dare say. But there's the truth. It's *money* I want, and if you can't help me to money it's no use talking.'

'And when you get the money what'll you do with it?' asked Penrose.

'Pay half a dozen people who can be trusted to help me kidnap Beatty and smuggle her over the Canadian frontier. I bungled the thing once. I don't mean to bungle it again.'

The answer was given slowly, without any bravado,

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but whatever energy of life there was in the speaker had gone into it.

'And there is no other way?' French's voice from the back was troubled.

'Ask him?' Roger pointed to Boyson.

'Is there any legal way, Boyson, in which I can recover the custody and companionship of my child?'

Boyson turned away.

'None that I know of — and I have made every possible inquiry.'

'And yet,' said Barnes, with emphasis, addressing the English barrister, 'by the law of England I am still Daphne's husband and that child's legal guardian?'

'Certainly.'

'And if I could once get her upon ground under the English flag, she would be mine again, and no power could take her from me?'

'Except the same private violence that you yourself propose to exercise.'

'I'd take care of that!' said Roger briefly.

'How do you mean to do it?' asked French, with knit brows. To be sitting there in an English vicarage plotting violence against a woman disturbed him.

'He and I'll manage it,' said the quiet voice of the American officer.

The others stared.

'*You?*' said French. 'An officer in active service? It might injure your career!'

'I shall risk it.'

A charming smile broke on Penrose's meditative face.

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'My dear French, this is much more amusing than the law. But I don't quite see where *I* come in.' He rose tentatively from his seat.

Boyson, however, did not smile. He looked from one to the other.

'My sister and I introduced Daphne Floyd to Barnes,' he said steadily, 'and it is my country, as I hold, — or a portion of it — that allows these villainies. Some day we shall get a great reaction in the States, and then the reforms that plenty of us are clamouring for will come about. Meanwhile, as of course you know' — he addressed French — 'New Yorkers and Bostonians suffer almost as much from the abomination that Nevada and South Dakota call laws, as Barnes has suffered. Marriage in the Eastern States is as sacred as with you — South Carolina allows no divorce at all — but with this license at our gates, no one is safe, and thousands of our women, in particular — for the women bring two thirds of the actions — are going to the deuce, simply because they have the opportunity of going. And the children — it does n't bear thinking of! Well — no good haranguing! I'm ashamed of my country in this matter — I have been for a long time — and I mean to help Barnes out, *coûte que coûte!* And as to the money, Barnes, you and I'll discuss that.'

Barnes lifted a face that quivered, and he and Boyson exchanged looks.

Penrose glanced at the pair. That imaginative power, combined with the power of drudgery, which was in process of making a great lawyer out of a Balliol scholar, showed him something typical and dramatic

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in the two figures: — in Boyson, on the one hand, so lithe, serviceable, and resolved, a helpful, mercurial man, ashamed of his country in this one respect, because he adored her in so many others, penitent and patriot in one: — in Barnes, on the other, so heavy, inert, and bewildered, a shipwrecked suppliant as it were, clinging to the knees of that very America which had so lightly and irresponsibly wronged him.

It was Penrose who broke the silence.

'Is there any chance of Mrs. Barnes's marrying again?' he asked.

Barnes turned to him.

'Not that I know of.'

'There's no one else in the case?'

'I never heard of any one.' Roger gave a short, excited laugh. 'What she's done, she's done because she was tired of me, not because she was in love with any one else. That was her great score in the divorce case — that there was nobody.'

Biting and twisting his lip, in a trick that recalled to French the beautiful Eton lad, cracking his brains in pupil-room over a bit of Latin prose, Roger glanced, frowning, from one to the other of these three men who felt for him, whose resentment of the wrong that had been done him, whose pity for his calamity showed plainly enough through their reticent speech.

His sense, indeed, of their sympathy began to move him, to break down his own self-command. No doubt, also, the fatal causes that ultimately ruined his will-power were already at work. At any rate, he broke out into sudden speech about his case. His complexion, now unhealthily delicate, like the complexion of a girl,

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had flushed deeply. As he spoke he looked mainly at French.

'There's lots of things you don't know,' he said in a hesitating voice, as though appealing to his old friend. And rapidly he told the story of Daphne's flight from Heston. Evidently since his return home many details that were once obscure had become plain to him; and the three listeners could perceive how certain new information had goaded and stung him afresh. He dwelt on the letters which had reached him during his first week's absence from home, after the quarrel — letters from Daphne and Miss Farmer, which were posted at intervals from Heston by their accomplice, the young architect, while the writers of them were hurrying across the Atlantic. The servants had been told that Mrs. Barnes, Miss Farmer, and the little girl were going to London for a day or two, and suspected nothing. 'I wrote long letters — lots of them — to my wife. I thought I had made everything right — not that there ever had been anything wrong, you understand, — seriously. But in some ways I had behaved like a fool.'

He threw himself back in his chair, pressing his hands on his eyes. The listeners sat or stood motionless.

'Well, I might have spared my pains. The letters were returned to me from the States. Daphne had arranged it all so cleverly that I was some time in tracing her. By the time I had got to Sioux Falls she was through a month of her necessary residence. My God!' — his voice dropped, became almost inaudible — 'if I'd only carried Beatty off *then!* — then and there — the frontier was n't far off — without waiting for anything more. But I would n't believe that

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Daphne could persist in such a monstrous thing, and, if she did, that any decent country would aid and abet her.'

Boyson made a movement of protest, as though he could not listen any longer in silence.

'I am ashamed to remind you, Barnes, — again — that your case is no worse than that of scores of American citizens. We are the first to suffer from our own enormities.'

'Perhaps,' said Barnes absently, 'perhaps.'

His impulse of speech dropped. He sat, drearily staring into the fire, absorbed in recollection.

Penrose had gone. So had Boyson. Roger was sitting by the fire in the vicar's study, ministered to by Elsie French and her children. By common consent the dismal subject of the day had been put aside. There was an attempt to cheer and distract him. The little boy of four was on his knee, declaiming the 'Owl and the Pussy Cat,' while Roger submissively turned the pages and pointed to the pictures of that immortal history. The little girl of two, curled up on her mother's lap close by, listened sleepily, and Elsie, applauding and prompting as a properly regulated mother should, was all the time, in spirit, hovering pitifully about her guest and his plight. There was in her, as in Boyson, a touch of patriotic remorse; and all the pieties of her own being, all the sacred memories of her own life, combined to rouse in her indignation and sympathy for Herbert's poor friend. The thought of what Daphne Barnes had done was to her a monstrosity hardly to be named. She spoke to the young man

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kindly and shyly, as though she feared lest any chance word might wound him; she was the symbol, in her young motherliness, of all that Daphne had denied and forsaken. 'When would America — dear, dear America! — see to it that such things were made impossible!'

Roger meanwhile was evidently cheered and braced. The thought of the interview to which Boyson had confidentially bidden him on the morrow ran warmly in his veins, and the children soothed him. The little boy especially, who was just Beatty's age, excited in him a number of practical curiosities. How about the last teeth? He actually inserted a coaxing and inquiring finger, the babe gravely suffering it. Any trouble with them? Beatty had once been very ill with hers, at Philadelphia, mostly caused, however, by some beastly, indigestible food that the nurse had let her have. And they allowed her to sit up much too late. Did n't Mrs. French think seven o'clock was late enough for any child not yet four? One could n't say that Beatty was a very robust child, but healthy — oh yes, healthy! — none of your sickly, rickety little things.

The curtains had been closed. The street children, the electric light outside, were no longer visible. Roger had begun to talk of departure, the baby had fallen asleep in her mother's arms, when there was another loud ring at the front door.

French, who was expecting the headmaster of his church schools, gathered up some papers and left the room. His wife, startled by what seemed an exclamation from him in the hall outside, raised her head a mo-

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ment to listen; but the sound of voices — surely a woman's voice? — died abruptly away, and the door of the dining-room closed. Roger heard nothing; he was laughing and crooning over the boy.

'The Pobble that lost his toes
Had once as many as we.'

The door opened. Herbert stood on the threshold beckoning to her. She rose in terror, the child in her arms, and went out to him. In a minute she reappeared in the doorway, her face ashen-white, and called to the little boy. He ran to her, and Roger rose, looking for the hat he had put down on entering.

Then French came in, and behind him a lady in black, dishevelled, bathed in tears. The vicar hung back. Roger turned in astonishment.

'Mother! You here? Mother!' — he hurried to her — 'what's the matter?'

She tottered toward him with outstretched hands.

'Oh Roger, Roger!'

His name died away in a wail as she clasped him.

'What is it, mother?'

'It's Beatty — my son! — my darling Roger!' She put up her hands piteously, bending his head down to her. 'It's a cable from Washington, from that woman, Mrs. Verrier. They did everything, Roger — it was only three days — and hopeless always. Yesterday convulsion came on — and this morning —' Her head dropped against her son's breast as her voice failed her. He put her roughly from him.

'What are you talking of, mother! Do you mean that Beatty has been ill?'

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'She died last night. Roger — my darling son — my poor Roger!'

'Died — last night — Beatty?'

French in silence handed him the telegram. Roger disengaged himself and walked to the fireplace, standing motionless, with his back to them, for a minute, while they held their breaths. Then he began to grope again for his hat, without a word.

'Come home with me, Roger!' implored his mother, pursuing him. 'We must bear it — bear it together. You see — she did n't suffer' — she pointed to the message — 'the darling! — the darling!'

Her voice lost itself in tears. But Roger brushed her away, as though resenting her emotion, and made for the door.

French also put out a hand.

'Roger, dear, dear old fellow! Stay here with us — with your mother. Where are you going?'

Roger looked at his watch unsteadily.

'The office will be closed,' he said to himself; 'but I can put some things together.'

'Where are you going, Roger?' cried Lady Barnes, pursuing him. Roger faced her.

'It's Tuesday. There'll be a White Star boat tomorrow.'

'But, Roger, what can you do? She's gone, dear — — she's gone. And before you can get there — long before — she will be in her grave.'

A spasm passed over his face, into which the colour rushed. Without another word he wrenched himself from her, opened the front door, and ran out into the night.

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CHAPTER X

'Was there ever anything so poetic, so suggestive?' said a charming voice. 'One might make a new Turner out of it — if one just happened to be Turner! — to match "Rain, Steam, and Speed."'

'What would you call it — "Mist, Light, and Spring"?'

Captain Boyson leant forward, partly to watch the wonderful landscape effect through which the train was passing, partly because his young wife's profile, her pure cheek and soft hair were so agreeably seen under the mingled light from outside.

They were returning from their wedding journey. Some six weeks before this date Boyson had married in Philadelphia a girl coming from one of the old Quaker stocks of that town, in whose tender steadfastness of character a man inclined both by nature and experience to expect little from life had found a happiness that amazed him.

The bridegroom, also, had just been appointed to the Military Attachéship at the Berlin Embassy, and the couple were, in fact, on their way south to New York and embarkation. But there were still a few days left of the honeymoon, of which they had spent the last half in Canada, and on this May night they were journeying from Toronto along the southern shore of Lake Ontario to the pleasant Canadian hotel which overlooks the pageant of Niagara. They had left Toronto in bright sunshine, but as they turned the

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corner of the lake westward, a white fog had come creeping over the land as the sunset fell.

But the daylight was still strong, the fog thin; so that it appeared rather as a veil of gold, amethyst, and opal, floating over the country, now parting altogether, now blotting out the orchards and the fields. And into the colour above melted the colour below. For the orchards that cover the Hamilton district of Ontario were in bloom, and the snow of the pear trees, the flush of the peach-blossom broke everywhere through the warm cloud of pearly mist; while, just as Mrs. Boyson spoke, the train had come in sight of the long flashing line of the Welland Canal, which wound its way, outlined by huge electric lamps, through the sunset and the fog, till the lights died in that northern distance where stretched the invisible shore of the great lake. The glittering waterway, speaking of the labour and commerce of men, the blossom-laden earth, the white approaching mist, the softly falling night: — the girl-bride could not tear herself from the spectacle. She sat beside the window entranced. But her husband had captured her hand, and into the overflowing beauty of nature there stole the thrill of their love.

'All very well!' said Boyson presently. 'But a fog at Niagara is no joke!'

The night stole on, and the cloud through which they journeyed grew denser. Up crept the fog, on stole the night. The lights of the canal faded, the orchards sank into darkness, and when the bride and bridegroom reached the station on the Canadian side the bride's pleasure had become dismay.

'Oh, Alfred, we shan't see anything!'

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And, indeed, as their carriage made its slow progress along the road that skirts the gorge, they seemed to plunge deeper and deeper into the fog. A white darkness, as though of impenetrable yet glimmering cloud, above and around them; a white abyss beneath them; and issuing from it the thunderous voice of wild waters, dim first and distant, but growing steadily in volume and terror.

'There are the lights of the bridge!' cried Boyson, 'and the towers of the aluminum works. But not a vestige of the Falls! Gone! Wiped out! I say, darling, this is going to be a disappointment.'

Mrs. Boyson, however, was not so sure. The lovely 'nocturne' of the evening plain had passed into a Vision or Masque of Force that captured the mind. High above the gulf rose the towers of the great works, transformed by the surging fog and darkness into some piled and castled fortress; a fortress of Science held by Intelligence. Lights were in the towers, as of genii at their work; lights glimmered here and there on the face of the farther cliff, as though to measure the vastness of the gorge and of that resounding vacancy towards which they moved. In front, the arch of the vast suspension bridge, pricked in light, crossed the gulf, from nothingness to nothingness, like that skyey bridge on which the gods marched to Walhalla. Otherwise, no shape, no landmark; earth and heaven had disappeared.

'Here we are at the hotel,' said Boyson. 'There, my dear,' — he pointed ironically — 'is the American Fall, and there — is the Canadian! Let me introduce you to Niagara!'

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They jumped out of the carriage, and while their bags were being carried in they ran to the parapeted edge of the cliff in front of the hotel. Niagara thundered in their ears; the spray of it beat upon their faces; but of the two great Falls immediately in front of them they saw nothing whatever. The fog, now cold and clammy, enwrapped them; even the bright lights of the hotel, but a stone's throw distant, were barely visible; and the carriage still standing at the steps had vanished.

Suddenly, some common impulse born of the moment and the scene — of its inhuman ghostliness and grandeur — drew them to each other. Boyson threw his arm round his young wife and pressed her to him, kissing her face and hair, bedewed by the spray. She clung to him passionately, trembling a little, as the roar deafened them and the fog swept round them.

As the Boysons lingered in the central hall of the hotel, reading some letters which had been handed to them, a lady in black passed along the gallery overhead and paused a moment to look at the new arrivals brought by the evening train.

As she perceived Captain Boyson there was a quick, startled movement; she bent a moment over the staircase, as though to make sure of his identity, and then ran along the gallery to a room at the farther end. As she opened the door a damp cold air streamed upon her, and the thunder of the Falls, with which the hotel is perpetually filled, seemed to redouble.

Three large windows opposite to her were, in fact,

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wide open; the room, with its lights dimmed by fog, seemed hung above the abyss.

An invalid couch stood in front of the window, and upon it lay a pale, emaciated woman, breathing quickly and feebly. At the sound of the closing door, Madeleine Verrier turned.

'Oh, Daphne, I was afraid you had gone out! You do such wild things!'

Daphne Barnes came to the side of the couch.

'Darling, I only went to speak to your maid for a moment. Are you sure you can stand all this damp fog?'

As she spoke Daphne took up a fur cloak lying on a chair near, and wrapped herself warmly in it.

'I can't breathe when they shut the windows. But it is too cold for you.'

'Oh, I'm all right in this.' Daphne drew the cloak round her.

Inwardly she said to herself, 'Shall I tell her the Boysons are here? Yes, I must. She is sure to hear it in some way.'

So, stooping over the couch, she said: —

'Do you know who arrived this evening? The Alfred Boysons. I saw them in the hall just now.'

'They're on their honeymoon?' asked the faint voice, after a just perceptible pause.

Daphne assented. 'She seems a pretty little thing.'

Madeleine Verrier opened her tired eyes to look at Daphne. Mrs. Floyd — as Daphne now called herself — was dressed in deep black. The costly gown revealed a figure which had recently become substantial, and the face on which the electric light shone had no-

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thing left in it of the girl, though Daphne Floyd was not yet thirty. The initial beauty of complexion was gone; so was the fleeting prettiness of youth. The eyes were as splendid as ever, but combined with the increased paleness of the cheeks, the greater prominence and determination of the mouth, and a certain austerity in the dressing of the hair, which was now firmly drawn back from the temples round which it used to curl, and worn high, *à la Marquise*, they expressed a personality — a formidable personality — in which self-will was no longer graceful, and power no longer magnetic. Madeleine Verrier gazed at her friend in silence. She was very grateful to Daphne, often very dependent on her. But there were moments when she shrank from her, when she would gladly never have seen her again. Daphne was still erect, self-confident, militant; whereas Madeleine knew herself vanquished — vanquished both in body and soul.

Certain inner miseries and discomforts had been set vibrating by the name of Captain Boyson.

'You won't want to see him or come across him?' she said abruptly.

'Who? Alfred Boyson? I am not afraid of him in the least. He may say what he pleases — or think what he pleases. It does n't matter to me.'

'When did you see him last?'

Daphne hesitated a moment. 'When he came to ask me for certain things which had belonged to Beatty.'

'For Roger? I remember. It must have been painful.'

'Yes,' said Daphne unwillingly, 'it was. He was very unfriendly. He always has been — since it happened.

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But I bore him no malice' — the tone was firm — 'and the interview was short.'

'——' The half inaudible word fell like a sigh from Madeleine's lips as she closed her eyes again to shut out the light which teased them. And presently she added, 'Do you ever hear anything now — from England?'

'Just what I might expect to hear — what more than justifies all that I did.'

Daphne sat rigid on her chair, her hands crossed on her lap. Mrs. Verrier did not pursue the conversation.

Outside the fog grew thicker and darker. Even the lights on the bridge were now engulfed. Daphne began to shiver in her fur cloak. She put out a cold hand and took one of Mrs. Verrier's.

'Dear Madeleine! Indeed, indeed, you ought to let me move you from this place. Do let me! There's the house at Stockbridge all ready. And in July I could take you to Newport. I must be off next week, for I've promised to take the chair at a big meeting at Buffalo on the 29th. But I can't bear to leave you behind. We could make the journey quite easy for you. That new car of mine is very comfortable.'

'I know it is. But, thank you, dear, I like this hotel; and it will be summer directly.'

Daphne hesitated. A strong protest against 'morbidness' was on her lips, but she did not speak of it. In the mist-filled room even the bright fire, the electric lights, had grown strangely dim. Only the roar outside was real — terribly, threateningly real. Yet the sound was not so much fierce as lamentable; the voice of Nature mourning the eternal flow and conflict at the

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heart of things. Daphne knew well that, mingled with this primitive, cosmic voice, there was — for Madeleine Verrier — another; a plaintive, human cry, that was drawing the life out of her breast, the blood from her veins, like some baneful witchcraft of old. But she dared not speak of it; she and the doctor who attended Mrs. Verrier dared no longer name the patient's 'obsession' even to each other. They had tried to combat it, to tear her from this place; with no other result, as it seemed, than to hasten the death-process which was upon her. Gently, but firmly, she had defied them, and they knew now that she would always defy them. For a year past, summer and winter, she had lived in this apartment facing the Falls; her nurses found her very patient under the incurable disease which had declared itself; Daphne came to stay with her when arduous engagements allowed, and Madeleine was always grateful and affectionate. But certain topics, and certain advocacies, had dropped out of their conversation — not by Daphne's will. There had been no spoken recantation; only the prophetess prophesied no more; and of late, especially when Daphne was not there — so Mrs. Floyd had discovered — a Roman Catholic priest had begun to visit Mrs. Verrier. Daphne, moreover, had recently noticed a small crucifix, hidden among the folds of the loose black dress which Madeleine commonly wore.

Daphne had changed her dress and dismissed her maid. Although it was May, a wood-fire had been lighted in her room to counteract the chilly damp of the evening. She hung over it, loth to go back to the sit-

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ting-room, and plagued by a depression that not even her strong will could immediately shake off. She wished the Boysons had not come. She supposed that Alfred Boyson would hardly cut her; but she was tolerably certain that he would not wish his young wife to become acquainted with her. She scorned his disapproval of her; but she smarted under it. It combined with Madeleine's strange delusions to put her on the defensive; to call out all the fierceness of her pride; to make her feel herself the champion of a sound and reasonable view of life as against weakness and reaction.

Madeleine's dumb remorse was, indeed, the most paralysing and baffling thing; nothing seemed to be of any avail against it, now that it had finally gained the upper hand. There had been dark times, no doubt, in the old days in Washington; times when the tragedy of her husband's death had overshadowed her. But in the intervals, what courage and boldness, what ardour in the declaration of that new Feminist gospel to which Daphne had in her own case borne witness! Daphne remembered well with what feverish readiness Madeleine had accepted her own pleas after her flight from England; how she had defended her against hostile criticism, had supported her during the divorce court proceedings, and triumphed in their result. 'You are unhappy? And he deceived you? Well, then, what more do you want? Free yourself, my dear, free yourself! What right have you to bear more children to a man who is a liar and a shuffler? It is our generation that must suffer, for the liberty of those that come after!'

What had changed her? Was it simply the approach

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of mortal illness, the old questioning of 'what dreams may come'? Superstition, in fact? As a girl she had been mystical and devout; so Daphne had heard.

Or was it the death of little Beatty, to whom she was much attached? She had seen something of Roger during that intermediate Philadelphia stage, when he and Beatty were allowed to meet at her house; and she had once or twice astonished and wounded Daphne at that time by sudden expressions of pity for him. It was she who had sent the cable message announcing the child's death, wording it as gently as possible, and had wept in sending it.

'As if I had n't suffered too!' cried Daphne's angry thought. And she turned to look at the beautiful miniature of Beatty set in pearls that stood upon her dressing-table. There was something in the recollection of Madeleine's sensibility with regard to the child — as in that of her compassion for the father's suffering — that offended Daphne. It seemed a reflexion upon herself, Beatty's mother, as lacking in softness and natural feeling.

On the contrary! She had suffered terribly; but she had thought it her duty to bear it with courage, not to let it interfere with the development of her life. And as for Roger, was it her fault that he had made it impossible for her to keep her promise? That she had been forced to separate Beatty from him? And if, as she understood now from various English correspondents, it was true that Roger had dropped out of decent society, did it not simply prove that she had guessed his character aright, and had only saved herself just in time?

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It was as though the sudden presence of Captain Boyson under the same roof had raised up a shadowy adversary and accuser, with whom she must go on thus arguing, and hotly defending herself, in a growing excitement. Not that she would ever stoop to argue with Alfred Boyson face to face. How could he ever understand the ideals to which she had devoted her powers and her money since the break-up of her married life? He could merely estimate what she had done in the commonest, vulgarest way. Yet who could truthfully charge her with having obtained her divorce in order thereby to claim any fresh licence for herself? She looked back now with a cool amazement on that sudden rush of passion which had swept her into marriage, no less than the jealousy which had led her to break with Roger. She was still capable of many kinds of violence; but not, probably, of the violence of love. The influence of sex and sense upon her had weakened; the influence of ambition had increased. As in many women of Southern race, the period of hot blood had passed into a period of intrigue and domination. Her wealth gave her power, and for that power she lived.

Yes, she was personally desolate, but she had stood firm, and her reward lay in the fact that she had gathered round her an army of dependents and followers — women especially — to whom her money and her brains were indispensable. There on the table lay the plans for a new Women's College, on the broadest and most modern lines, to which she was soon to devote a large sum of money. The walls should have been up by now but for a quarrel with her secretary, who had become much too independent, and had had to be per-

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emptorily dismissed at a moment's notice. But the plan was a noble one, approved by the highest authorities; and Daphne, looking to posterity, anticipated the recognition that she herself might never live to see. For the rest she had given herself — with reservations — to the Feminist movement. It was not in her nature to give herself wholly to anything; and she was instinctively critical of people who professed to be her leaders, and programmes to which she was expected to subscribe. Whole-hearted devotion, which, as she rightly said, meant blind devotion, had never been her line; and she had been on one or two occasions offensively outspoken on the subject of certain leading persons in the movement. She was not, therefore, popular with her party, and did not care to be; her pride of money held her apart from the rank and file, the college girls, and typists, and journalists who filled the Feminist meetings, and often made themselves, in her eyes, supremely ridiculous, because of what she considered their silly provinciality and lack of knowledge of the world.

Yet, of course, she was a 'Feminist' — and particularly associated with those persons in the suffrage camp who stood for broad views on marriage and divorce. She knew very well that many other persons in the same camp held different opinions; and in public or official gatherings was always nervously — most people thought arrogantly — on the look-out for affronts. Meanwhile, everywhere, or almost everywhere, her money gave her power, and her knowledge of it was always sweet to her. There was nothing in the world — no cause, no faith — that she could have accepted

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'as a little child.' But everywhere, in her own opinion, she stood for Justice; justice for women as against the old primeval tyranny of men; justice, of course, to the workman, and justice to the rich. No foolish Socialism, and no encroaching Trusts! A lucid common sense, so it seemed to her, had been her cradle-gift.

And with regard to Art, how much she had been able to do! She had generously helped the public collections, and her own small gallery, at the house in Newport, was famous throughout England and America. That in the course of the preceding year she had found among the signatures, extracted from visitors by the custodian in charge, the name of Chloe Fairmile, had given her a peculiar satisfaction.

She walked proudly across the room, her head thrown back, every nerve tense. Let the ignorant and stupid blame her if they chose. She stood absolved. Memory reminded her, moreover, of a great number of kind and generous things — private things — that she had done with her money. If men like Herbert French, or Alfred Boyson, denounced her, there were many persons who felt warmly towards her — and had cause. As she thought of them the tears rose in her eyes. Of course she could never make such things public.

Outside the fog seemed to be lifting a little. There was a silvery light in the southeast, a gleam and radiance over the gorge. If the moon struggled through, it would be worth while slipping out after dinner to watch its play upon the great spectacle. She was careful to cherish in herself an openness to noble impressions and to the high poetry of nature and life.

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And she must not allow herself to be led by the casual neighbourhood of the Boysons into weak or unprofitable thought.

The Boysons dined at a table, gay with lights and flowers, that should have commanded the Falls but for the curtain of fog. Niagara, however, might flout them if it pleased; they could do without Niagara. They were delighted that the hotel, apparently, contained no one they knew. All they wanted was to be together, and alone. But the bride was tired by a long day in the train; her smiles began presently to flag, and by nine o'clock her husband had insisted on sending her to rest.

After escorting her upstairs Captain Boyson returned to the verandah, which was brightly lit up, in order to read some letters that were still unopened in his pocket. But before he began upon them he was seized once more by the wizardry of the scene. Was that indistinct glimmer in the far distance — that intenser white on white — the eternal cloud of spray that hangs over the Canadian Fall? If so, the fog was indeed yielding, and the full moon behind it would triumph before long. On the other hand, he could no longer see the lights of the bridge at all; the rolling vapour choked the gorge, and the waiter who brought him his coffee dryly prophesied that there would not be much change under twenty-four hours.

He fell back upon his letters, well pleased to see that one among them came from Herbert French, with whom the American officer had maintained a warm friendship since the day of a certain consultation in

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French's East-End library. The letter was primarily one of congratulation, written with all French's charm and sympathy; but over the last pages of it Boyson's face darkened, for they contained a deplorable account of the man whom he and French had tried to save.

The concluding passage of the letter ran as follows:

'You will scarcely wonder after all this that we see him very seldom, and that he no longer gives us his confidence. Yet both Elsie and I feel that he cares for us as much as ever. And, indeed, poor fellow, he himself remains strangely loveable, in spite of what one must — alas! — believe as to his ways of life and the people with whom he associates. There is in him, always, something of what Meyers called "the imperishable child." That a man who might have been so easily led to good has been so fatally thrust into evil is one of the abiding sorrows of my life. How can I reproach him for his behaviour? As the law stands, he can never marry; he can never have legitimate children. Under the wrong he has suffered, and, no doubt, in consequence of that illness in New York, when he was badly nursed and cared for — from which, in fact, he has never wholly recovered — his will-power and nerve, which were never very strong, have given way; he broods upon the past perpetually, and on the loss of his child. Our poor Apollo, Boyson, will soon have lost himself wholly, and there is no one to help.

'Do you ever see or hear anything of that woman? Do you know what has become of her? I see you are to have a Conference on your Divorce Laws — that

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opinion and indignation are rising. For Heaven's sake, do something! I gather some appalling facts from a recent Washington report. One in twelve of all your marriages dissolved! A man or a woman divorced in one state, and still bound in another! The most trivial causes for the break-up of marriage, accepted and acted upon by corrupt courts, and reform blocked by a phalanx of corrupt interests! Is it all true? An American correspondent of mine — a lady — repeats to me what you once said, that it is the women who bring the majority of the actions. She impresses upon me also the remarkable fact that it is apparently only in a minority of cases that a woman, when she has got rid of her husband, marries someone else. It is not passion, therefore, that dictates many of these actions; no serious cause or feeling, indeed, of any kind; but rather an ever-spreading restlessness and levity, a readiness to tamper with the very foundations of society, for a whim, a nothing! — in the interests, of ten, of what women call their "individuality"! No foolish talk here of being "members one of another"! We have outgrown all that. The facilities are always there, and the temptation of them. "The women — especially — who do these things," she writes me, "are moral anarchists. One can appeal to nothing; they acknowledge nothing. Transformations infinitely far-reaching and profound are going on among us."'

'"*Appeal to nothing!*" And this said of women, by a woman! It was of *men* that a Voice said long ago: "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives" — on just such grounds apparently — trivial and cruel pretexts — as

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your American courts admit. "But *I* say unto you!— *I say unto you!*" . . .

'Well, I am a Christian priest, incapable, of course, of an unbiassed opinion. My correspondent tries to explain the situation a little by pointing out that your women in America claim to be the superiors of your men, to be more intellectual, better-mannered, more refined. Marriage disappoints or disgusts them, and they impatiently put it aside. They break it up, and seem to pay no penalty. But you and I believe that they will pay it! — that there are divine avenging forces in the very law they tamper with — and that, as a nation, you must either retrace some of the steps taken, or sink in the scale of life.

'How I run on! And all because my heart is hot within me for the suffering of one man, and the hardness of one woman!'

Boyson raised his eyes. As he did so he saw dimly through the mist the figure of a lady, veiled, and wrapped in a fur cloak, crossing the farther end of the verandah. He half rose from his seat, with an exclamation. She ran down the steps leading to the road and disappeared in the fog.

Boyson stood looking after her, his mind in a whirl.

The manager of the hotel came hurriedly out of the same door by which Daphne Floyd had emerged, and spoke to a waiter on the verandah, pointing in the direction she had taken.

Boyson heard what was said, and came up. A short conversation passed between him and the manager. There was a moment's pause on Boyson's part; he still held French's letter in his hand. At last, thrusting

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it into his pocket, he hurried to the steps whereby Daphne had left the hotel, and pursued her into the cloud outside.

The fog was now rolling back from the gorge, upon the Falls, blotting out the transient gleams which had seemed to promise a lifting of the veil, leaving nothing around or beneath but the white and thunderous abyss.

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CHAPTER XI

DAPHNE'S purpose in quitting the hotel had been to find her way up the river by the road which runs along the gorge on the Canadian side, from the hotel to the Canadian Fall. Thick as the fog still was in the gorge she hoped to find some clearer air beyond it. She felt oppressed and stifled; and though she had told Madeleine that she was going out in search of effects and spectacle, it was in truth the neighbourhood of Alfred Boyson which had made her restless.

The road was lit at intervals by electric lamps, but after a time she found the passage of it not particularly easy. Some repairs to the tramway lines were going on higher up, and she narrowly escaped various pitfalls in the shape of trenches and holes in the roadway, very insufficiently marked by feeble lamps. But the stir in her blood drove her on; so did the strangeness of this white darkness, suffused with moonlight, yet in this immediate neighbourhood of the Falls, impenetrable. She was impatient to get through it; to breathe an unembarrassed air.

The roar at her left hand grew wilder. She had reached a point some distance from the hotel, close to the jutting corner, once open, now walled and protected, where the traveller approaches nearest to the edge of the Canadian Fall. She knew the spot well, and groping for the wall, she stood breathless and spray-beaten beside the gulf.

Only a few yards from her the vast sheet of water

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descended. She could see nothing of it, but the wind of its mighty plunge blew back her hair, and her mackintosh cloak was soon dripping with the spray. Once, far away, above the Falls, she seemed to perceive a few dim lights along the bend of the river; perhaps from one of the great power-houses that tame to man's service the spirits of the water. Otherwise — nothing! She was alone with the perpetual challenge and fascination of the Falls.

As she stood there she was seized by a tragic recollection. It was from this spot, so she believed, that Leopold Verrier had thrown himself over. The body had been carried down through the rapids, and recovered, terribly injured, in the deep eddying pool which the river makes below them. He had left no letter or message of any sort behind him. But the reasons for his suicide were clearly understood by a large public, whose main verdict upon it was the quiet 'What else could he do?'

Here, then, on this very spot, he had stood before his leap. Daphne had heard him described by various spectators of the marriage. He had been, it seemed, a man of sensitive temperament, who should have been an artist and was a man of business; a considerable musician, and something of a poet; proud of his race and faith and himself irreproachable, yet perpetually wounded through his family, which bore a name of ill-repute in the New York business world; passionately grateful to his wife for having married him, delighting in her beauty and charm, and foolishly, abjectly eager to heap upon her and their child everything that wealth could buy.

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'It was Madeleine's mother who made it hopeless,' thought Daphne. 'But for Mrs. Fanshaw — it might have lasted.'

And memory called up Mrs. Fanshaw, the beautifully dressed woman of fifty, with her pride of wealth and family, belonging to the strictest sect of New York's social *élite*, with her hard, fastidious face, her formidable elegance and self-possession. How she had loathed the marriage! And with what a harpy-like eagerness had she seized on the first signs of Madeleine's discontent and *ennui;* persuaded her to come home; prepared the divorce; poisoned public opinion. It was from a last interview with Mrs. Fanshaw that Leopold Verrier had gone straight to his death. What was it that she had said to him?

Daphne lingered on the question; haunted, too, by other stray recollections of the dismal story — the doctor driving by in the early morning who had seen the fall; the discovery of the poor broken body; Madeleine's blanched stoicism, under the fierce coercion of her mother; and that strong, silent, slow-setting tide of public condemnation, which in this instance, at least, had avenged a cruel act.

But at this point Daphne ceased to think about her friend. She found herself suddenly engaged in a heated self-defence. What comparison could there be between her case and Madeleine's?

Fiercely she found herself going through the list of Roger's crimes; his idleness, treachery, and deceit; his lack of any high ideals; his bad influence on the child; his luxurious self-indulgent habits, the lies he had told, the insults he had offered her. By now the story had

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grown to a lurid whole in her imagination, based on a few distorted facts, yet radically and monstrously untrue. Generally, however, when she dwelt upon it, it had power to soothe any smart of conscience, to harden any yearning of the heart, supposing she felt any. And by now she had almost ceased to feel any.

But to-night she was mysteriously shaken and agitated. As she clung to the wall, which alone separated her from the echoing gulf beyond, she could not prevent herself from thinking of Roger, Roger as he was when Alfred Boyson introduced him to her, when they first married, and she had been blissfully happy; happy in the possession of such a god-like creature, in the envy of other women, in the belief that he was growing more and more truly attached to her.

Her thoughts broke abruptly. 'He married me for money!' cried the inward voice. Then she felt her cheeks tingling as she remembered her conversation with Madeleine on that very subject — how she had justified what she was now judging — how plainly she had understood and condoned it.

'That was my inexperience! Besides, I knew nothing then of Chloe Fairmile. If I had — I should never have done it.'

She turned, startled. Steps seemed to be approaching her, of some one as yet invisible. Her nerves were all on edge, and she felt suddenly frightened. Strangers of all kinds visit and hang about Niagara; she was quite alone, known to be the rich Mrs. Floyd; if she were attacked — set upon —

The outline of a man's form emerged; she heard her name, or rather the name she had renounced.

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'I saw you come in this direction, Mrs. Barnes. I knew the road was up in some places, and I thought in this fog you would allow me to warn you that walking was not very safe.'

The voice was Captain Boyson's; and they were now plain to each other as they stood a couple of yards apart. The fog, however, was at last slightly breaking. There was a gleam over the nearer water; not merely the lights, but the span of the bridge had begun to appear.

Daphne composed herself with an effort.

'I am greatly obliged to you,' she said in her most freezing manner. 'But I found no difficulty at all in getting through, and the fog is lifting.'

With a stiff inclination she turned in the direction of the hotel, but Captain Boyson stood in her way. She saw a face embarrassed yet resolved.

'Mrs. Barnes, may I speak to you a few minutes?'

Daphne gave a slight laugh.

'I don't see how I can prevent it. So you did n't follow me, Captain Boyson, out of mere regard for my personal safety?'

'If I had n't come myself I should have sent some one,' he replied quietly. 'The hotel people were anxious. But I wished to come myself. I confess I had a very strong desire to speak to you.'

'There seems to be nothing and no one to interfere with it,' said Daphne, in a tone of sarcasm. 'I should be glad, however, with your permission, to turn homeward. I see Mrs. Boyson is here. You are, I suppose, on your wedding journey?'

He moved out of her path, said a few conventional

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words, and they walked on. A light wind had risen and the fog was now breaking rapidly. As it gave way, the moonlight poured into the breaches that the wind made; the vast black-and-silver spectacle, the Falls, the gorge, the town opposite, the bridge, the clouds, began to appear in fragments, grandiose and fantastical.

Daphne, presently, seeing that Boyson was slow to speak, raised her eyebrows and attempted a remark on the scene. Boyson interrupted her hurriedly.

'I imagine, Mrs. Barnes, that what I wish to say will seem to you a piece of insolence. All the same, for the sake of our former friendship, I would ask you to bear with me.'

'By all means!'

'I had no idea that you were in the hotel. About half an hour ago, on the verandah, I opened an English letter which arrived this evening. The news in it gave me great concern. Then I saw you appear, to my astonishment, in the distance. I asked the hotel manager if it were really you. He was about to send some one after you. An idea occurred to me. I saw my opportunity — and I pursued you.'

'And here I am, at your mercy!' said Daphne, with sudden sharpness. 'You have left me no choice. However, I am quite willing.'

The voice was familiar yet strange. There was in it the indefinable hardening and ageing which seemed to Boyson to have affected the whole personality. What had happened to her? As he looked at her in the dim light there rushed upon them both the memory of those three weeks by the seaside years before, when he

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had fallen in love with her, and she had first trifled with, and then repulsed him.

'I wished to ask you a question, in the name of our old friendship; and because I have also become a friend — as you know — of your husband.'

He felt, rather than saw, the start of anger in the woman beside him.

'Captain Boyson! I cannot defend myself, but I would ask you to recognise ordinary courtesies. I have now no husband.'

'Of your husband,' he repeated, without hesitation, yet gently. 'By the law of England, at least, which you accepted, and under which you became a British subject, you are still the wife of Roger Barnes, and he has done nothing whatever to forfeit his right to your wifely care. It is indeed of him and of his present state that I beg to be allowed to speak to you.'

He heard a little laugh beside him — unsteady and hysterical.

'You beg for what you have already taken. I repeat, I am at your mercy. An American subject, Captain Boyson, knows nothing of the law of England. I have recovered my American citizenship, and the law of my country has freed me from a degrading and disastrous marriage!'

'While Roger remains bound? Incapable, at the age of thirty, of marrying again, unless he renounces his country — permanently debarred from home and children!'

His pulse ran quick. It was a strange adventure, this, to which he had committed himself!

'I have nothing to do with English law, nothing

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whatever! It is unjust, monstrous. But that was no reason why I, too, should suffer!'

'No reason for patience? No reason for pity?' said the man's voice, betraying emotion at last. 'Mrs. Barnes, what do you know of Roger's present state?'

'I have no need to know anything.'

'It matters nothing to you? Nothing to you that he has lost health, and character, and happiness, his child, his home, everything, owing to your action?'

'Captain Boyson!' she cried, her composure giving way, 'this is intolerable, outrageous! It is humiliating that you should even expect me to argue with you. Yet,' she bit her lip, angry with the agitation that would assail her, 'for the sake of our friendship to which you appeal, I would rather not be angry. What you say is monstrous!' her voice shook. 'In the first place, I freed myself from a man who married me for money.'

'One moment! Do you forget that from the day you left him Roger has never touched a farthing of your money? That he returned everything to you?'

'I had nothing to do with that; it was his own folly.'

'Yes, but it throws light upon his character. Would a mere fortune-hunter have done it? No, Mrs. Barnes! — that view of Roger does not really convince you, you do not really believe it.'

She smiled bitterly.

'As it happens, in his letters to me after I left him, he amply confessed it.'

'Because his wish was to make peace, to throw himself at your feet. He accused himself, more than was just. But you do not really think him mercenary

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and greedy, do you, you *know* that he was neither! Mrs. Barnes, Roger is ill and lonely.'

'His mode of life accounts for it.'

'You mean that he has begun to drink, has fallen into bad company. That may be true. I cannot deny it. But consider. A man from whom everything is torn at one blow; a man of not very strong character, not accustomed to endure hardness. — Does it never occur to you that you took a frightful responsibility?'

'I protected myself — and my child.'

He breathed deep.

'Or rather — did you murder a life — that God had given you in trust?'

He paused, and she paused also, as though held by the power of his will. They were passing along the public garden that borders the road; scents of lilac and fresh leaf floated over the damp grass; the moonlight was growing in strength, and the majesty of the gorge, the roar of the leaping water all seemed to enter into the moral and human scene, to accent and deepen it.

Daphne suddenly clung to a seat beside the path, dropped into it.

'Captain Boyson! I—I cannot bear this any longer.'

'I will not reproach you any more,' he said, quietly. 'I beg your pardon. The past is irrevocable, but the present is here. The man who loved you, the father of your child, is alone, ill, poor, in danger of moral ruin, because of what you have done. I ask you to go to his aid. But first let me tell you exactly what I have just heard from England.' He repeated the greater part of French's letter, so far as it concerned Roger.

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'He has his mother,' said Daphne, when he paused, speaking with evident physical difficulty.

'Lady Barnes I hear had a paralytic stroke two months ago. She is incapable of giving advice or help.'

'Of course, I am sorry. But Herbert French —'

'No one but a wife could save him — no one!' he repeated with emphasis.

'I am *not* his wife!' she insisted faintly. 'I released myself by American law. He is nothing to me.' As she spoke she leant back against the seat and closed her eyes. Boyson saw clearly that excitement and anger had struck down her nervous power, that she might faint or go into hysterics. Yet a man of remarkable courtesy and pitifulness towards women was not thereby moved from his purpose. He had his chance; he could not relinquish it. Only there was something now in her attitude which recalled the young Daphne of years ago; which touched his heart.

He sat down beside her.

'Bear with me, Mrs. Barnes, for a few moments, while I put it as it appears to another mind. You became first jealous of Roger, for very small reason, then tired of him. Your marriage no longer satisfied you — you resolved to be quit of it; so you appealed to laws of which, as a nation, we are ashamed, which all that is best among us will, before long, rebel against and change. Our State system permits them — America suffers. In this case — forgive me if I put it once more as it appears to me — they have been used to strike at an Englishman who had absolutely no defence, no redress. And now you are free; he remains bound — so long,

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at least, as you form no other tie. Again I ask you, have you ever let yourself face what it means to a man of thirty to be cut off from lawful marriage and legitimate children? Mrs. Barnes! you know what a man is, his strength and his weakness. Are you really willing that Roger should sink into degradation in order that you may punish him for some offence to your pride or your feeling? It may be too late! He may, as French fears, have fallen into some fatal entanglement; it may not be possible to restore his health. He may not be able' — he hesitated, then brought the words out firmly — 'to forgive you. Or again, French's anxieties about him may be unfounded. But for God's sake go to him! Once on English ground you are his wife again as though nothing had happened. For God's sake put everything aside but the thought of the vow you once made to him! Go back! I implore you, go back! I promise you that no happiness you have ever felt will be equal to the happiness that step would bring you, if only you are permitted to save him.'

Daphne was by now shaking from head to foot. The force of feeling which impelled him so mastered her that when he gravely took her hand she did not withdraw it. She had a strange sense of having at last discovered the true self of the quiet, efficient, unpretending man she had known for so long and cast so easily aside. There was shock and excitement in it, as there is in all trials of strength between a man and a woman. She tried to hate and despise him, but she could not achieve it. She longed to answer and crush him, but her mind was a blank, her tongue refused its office. Surprise, resentment, wounded feeling made a tumult

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and darkness through which she could not find her way.

She rose at last painfully from her seat.

'This conversation must end,' she said brokenly. 'Captain Boyson, I appeal to you as a gentleman, let me go on alone.'

He looked at her sadly and stood aside. But as he saw her move uncertainly toward a portion of the road where various trenches and pits made walking difficult, he darted after her.

'Please!' he said peremptorily, 'this bit is unsafe.'

He drew her hand within his arm and guided her. As he did so he saw that she was crying; no doubt, as he rightly guessed, from shaken nerves and wounded pride; for it did not seem to him that she had yielded at all. But this time he felt distress and compunction.

'Forgive me!' he said, bending over her. 'But think of what I have said — I beg of you! Be kind, be merciful!'

She made various attempts to speak, and at last she said, 'I bear you no malice. But you don't understand me, you never have.'

He offered no reply. They had reached the courtyard of the hotel. Daphne withdrew her hand. When she reached the steps she preceded him without looking back, and was soon lost to sight.

Boyson shook his head, lit a cigar, and spent some time longer pacing up and down the verandah. When he went to his wife's room he found her asleep, a vision of soft youth and charm. He stood a few moments looking down upon her, wondering in himself at what he had done. Yet he knew very well that it was the

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stirring and deepening of his whole being produced by love that had impelled him to do it.

Next morning he told his wife.

'Do you suppose I produced *any* effect?' he asked her anxiously. 'If she really thinks over what I said, she *must* be touched! unless she's made of flint. I said all the wrong things — but I *did* rub it in.'

'I'm sure you did,' said his wife, smiling. Then she looked at him with a critical tenderness.

'You dear optimist!' she cried, and slipped her hand into his.

'That means you think I behaved like a fool, and that my appeal won't move her in the least?'

The face beside him saddened.

'Dear, dear optimist!' she repeated, and pressed his hand. He urged an explanation of her epithet. But she only said, thoughtfully: —

'You took a great responsibility!'

'Towards her?'

She shook her head.

'No — towards him!'

Meanwhile Daphne was watching beside a death-bed. On her return from her walk she had been met by the news of fresh and grave symptoms in Mrs. Verrier's case. A Boston doctor arrived the following morning. The mortal disease which had attacked her about a year before this date had entered, so he reported, on its last phase. He talked of a few days—possibly hours.

The Boysons departed, having left cards of inquiry and sympathy, of which Mrs. Floyd took no notice. Then for Daphne there followed a nightmare of wait-

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ing and pain. She loved Madeleine Verrier, as far as she was capable of love, and she jealously wished to be all in all to her in these last hours. She would have liked to feel that it was she who had carried her friend through them; who had nobly sustained her in the dolorous past. To have been able to feel this would have been as balm moreover to a piteously wounded self-love, to a smarting and bitter recollection, which would not let her rest.

But in these last days Madeleine escaped her altogether. A thin-faced priest arrived, the same who had been visiting the invalid at intervals for a month or two. Mrs. Verrier was received into the Roman Catholic Church; she made her first confession and communion; she saw her mother for a short, final interview, and her little girl; and the physical energy required for these acts exhausted her small store. Whenever Daphne entered her room Madeleine received her tenderly; but she could speak but little, and Daphne felt herself shut out and ignored. What she said or thought was no longer, it seemed, of any account. She resented and despised Madeleine's surrender to what she held to be a decaying superstition; and her haughty manner toward the mild Oratorian whom she met occasionally on the stairs, or in the corridor, expressed her disapproval. But it was impossible to argue with a dying woman. She suffered in silence.

As she sat beside the patient, in the hours of narcotic sleep, when she relieved one of the nurses, she went often through times of great bitterness. She could not forgive the attack Captain Boyson had made upon her; yet she could not forget it. It had so far roused her

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moral sense that it led her to a perpetual brooding over the past, a perpetual re-statement of her own position. She was most troubled, often, by certain episodes in the past, of which, she supposed Alfred Boyson knew least; the corrupt use she had made of her money; the false witnesses she had paid for; the bribes she had given. At the time it had seemed to her all part of the campaign, in the day's work. She had found herself in a *milieu* that demoralised her; her mind had become like 'the dyer's hand, subdued to what it worked in.' Now, she found herself thinking in a sudden terror, 'If Alfred Boyson knew so and so!' or, as she looked down on Madeleine's dying face, 'Could I even tell Madeleine that?' And then would come the dreary thought, 'I shall never tell her anything any more. She is lost to me — even before death.'

She tried to avoid thinking of Roger; but the memory of the scene with Alfred Boyson did, in truth, bring him constantly before her. An inner debate began, from which she could not escape. She grew white and ill with it. If she could have rushed away from it, into the full stream of life, have thrown herself into meetings and discussion, have resumed her place as the admired and flattered head of a particular society, she could easily have crushed and silenced the thoughts which tormented her.

But she was held fast. She could not desert Madeleine Verrier in death; she could not wrench her own hand from this frail hand which clung to it; even though Madeleine had betrayed the common cause, had yielded at last to that moral and spiritual cowardice which — as all freethinkers know — has spoiled and

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clouded so many death-beds. Daphne — the skimmer of many books — remembered how Renan — *sain et sauf* — had sent a challenge to his own end, and defying the possible weakness of age and sickness, had demanded to be judged by the convictions of life, and not by the terrors of death. She tried to fortify her own mind by the recollection.

The first days of June broke radiantly over the great gorge and the woods which surround it. One morning, early, between four and five o'clock, Daphne came in, to find Madeleine awake and comparatively at ease. Yet the preceding twenty-four hours had been terrible, and her nurses knew that the end could not be far off.

The invalid had just asked that her couch might be drawn as near to the window as possible, and she lay looking towards the dawn, which rose in fresh and windless beauty over the town opposite and the white splendour of the Falls. The American Fall was still largely in shadow; but the light struck on the fresh green of Goat Island and leaped in tongues of fire along the edge of the Horseshoe, turning the rapids above it to flame and sending shafts into the vast tower of spray that holds the centre of the curve. Nature was all youth, glitter and delight; summer was rushing on the gorge; the mingling of wood and water was at its richest and noblest.

Madeleine turned her face towards the gorge, her wasted hands clasped on her breast. She beckoned Daphne with a smile, and Daphne knelt down beside her.

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'The water!' said the whispering voice; 'it was once so terrible. I am not afraid — now.'

'No, darling. Why should you be?'

'I know now, I shall see him again.'

Daphne was silent.

'I hoped it, but I could n't be certain. That was so awful. Now — I am certain.'

'Since you became a Catholic?'

She made a sign of assent.

'I could n't be uncertain — I *could n't!*' she added with fervour, looking strangely at Daphne. And Daphne, understood that no voice less positive or self-confident than that of Catholicism, no religion less well provided with tangible rites and practices, could have lifted from the spirit the burden of that remorse which had yet killed the body.

A little later Madeleine drew her down again.

'I could n't talk, Daphne — I was afraid; but I've written to you, just bit by bit, as I had strength. Oh, Daphne —!'

Then voice and strength failed her. Her eyes piteously followed her friend for a little, and then closed.

She lingered through the day; and at night when the June starlight was on the gorge, she passed away, with the voice of the Falls in her dying ears. A tragic beauty — 'beauty born of murmuring sound' — had passed into her face; and that great plunge of many waters, which had been to her in life the symbol of anguish and guilt, had become in some mysterious way the comforter of her pain, the friend of her last sleep.

A letter was found for Daphne in the little box beside her bed.

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It ran thus: —

DAPHNE, DARLING, —

It was I who first taught you that we may follow our own lawless wills, and that marriage is something we may bend or break as we will. But, oh! it is not so. Marriage is mysterious and wonderful; it is the supreme test of men and women. If we wrong it, and despise it, we mutilate the divine in ourselves.

Oh, Daphne! it is a small thing to say 'Forgive!' Yet it means the whole world. —

And you can still say it to the living. It has been my anguish that I could only say it to the dead. . . . Daphne, good-bye! I have fought a long, long fight, but God is master — I bless — I adore —

Daphne sat staring at the letter through a mist of unwilling tears. All its phrases, ideas, preconceptions, were unwelcome, unreal to her, though she knew they had been real to Madeleine.

Yet the compulsion of the dead was upon her, and of her scene with Boyson. What they asked of her — Madeleine and Alfred Boyson— was of course out of the question; the mere thought of that humiliating word 'forgiveness' sent a tingle of passion through her. But was there no third course? — something which might prove to all the world how full of resource and generosity a woman may be?

She pondered through some sleepless hours; and at last she saw her way plain.

Within a week she had left New York for Europe.

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CHAPTER XII

THE ship on which Daphne travelled had covered about half her course. On a certain June evening Mrs. Floyd, walking up and down the promenade deck, found her attention divided between two groups of her fellow-travellers; one taking exercise on the same deck as herself; the other, a family party, on the steerage deck, on which many persons in the first class paused to look down with sympathy as they reached the dividing rail aft.

The group on the promenade deck consisted of a lady and gentleman, and a boy of seven. The elders walked rapidly, holding themselves stiffly erect, and showing no sign of acquaintance with any one on board. The child dragged himself wearily along behind them, looking sometimes from side to side at the various people passing by, with eyes no less furtive than his mother's. She was a tall and handsome woman, with extravagantly marine clothes and much false hair. Her companion, a bulky and ill-favoured man, glanced superciliously at the ladies in the deck chairs, bestowing always a more attentive scrutiny than usual on a very pretty girl, who was lying reading midway down, with a white lace scarf draped around her beautiful hair and the harmonious oval of her face. Daphne, watching him, remembered that she had seen him speaking to the girl — who was travelling alone — on one or two occasions. For the rest, they were a notori-

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ous couple. The woman had been twice divorced, after misdoings which had richly furnished the newspaper; the man belonged to a financial class with which reputable men of business associate no more than they are obliged. The ship left them severely alone; and they retaliated by a manner clearly meant to say that they did n't care a brass farthing for the ship.

The group on the steerage deck was of a very different kind. It was made up of a consumptive wife, a young husband and one or two children. The wife's malady, recently declared, had led to their being refused admission to the States. They had been turned back from the emigrant station on Ellis Island, and were now sadly returning to Liverpool. But the courage of the young and sweet-faced mother, the devotion of her Irish husband, the charm of her dark-eyed children, had roused much feeling in an idle ship, ready for emotion. There had been a collection for them among the passengers; a Liverpool shipowner, in the first class, had promised work to the young man on landing; the mother was to be sent to a sanatorium; the children cared for during her absence. The family made a kind of nucleus round which whatever humanity — or whatever imitation of it — there was on board might gather and crystallize. There were other mournful cases indeed to be studied on the steerage deck, but none in which misfortune was so attractive.

As she walked up and down, or sat in the tea room catching fragments of the conversation round her, Daphne was often secretly angered by the public opinion she perceived, favourable in the one case, hostile in the other. How ignorant and silly it was — this pub-

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lic opinion. As to herself, she was soon aware that a few people on board had identified her and communicated their knowledge to others. On the whole, she felt herself treated with deference. Her own version of her story was clearly accepted, at least by the majority; some showed her an unspoken but evident sympathy, while her wealth made her generally interesting. Yet there were two or three in whom she felt or fancied a more critical attitude; who looked at her coolly, and seemed to avoid her. Bostonian Pharisees, no doubt! — ignorant of all those great expansions of the female destiny that were going forward.

The fact was — she admitted it — that she was abnormally sensitive. These moral judgments, of different sorts, of which she was conscious, floating as it were in the life around her, which her mind isolated and magnified, found her smarting and sore, and would not let her be. Her irritable pride was touched at every turn; she hardly knew why. She was not to be judged by anybody; she was her own defender and her own judge. If she was no longer a symbolic and sympathetic figure — like that young mother among her children — she had her own claims. In the secrecy of the mind she fiercely set them out.

The days passed, however, and as she neared the English shores her resistance to a pursuing thought became fainter. It was, of course, Boyson's astonishing appeal to her that had let loose the Avenging Goddesses. She repelled them with scorn; yet all the same they hurtled round her. After all, she was no monster. She had done a monstrous thing in a sudden brutality of egotism; and a certain crude state of law

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and opinion had helped her to do it, had confused the moral values and falsified her conscience. But she was not yet brutalised. Moreover, do what she would, she was still in a world governed by law; a world at the heart of which broods a power austere and immutable; a power which man did not make, which, if he clash with it, grinds him to powder. Its manifestations in Daphne's case were slight, but enough. She was not happy, that certainly was clear. She did not suppose she ever would be happy again. Whatever it was — just, heroic, or the reverse — the action by which she had violently changed her life had not been a success, estimated by results. No other man had attracted her since she had cast Roger off; her youth seemed to be deserting her; she saw herself in the glass every morning with discontent, even a kind of terror; she had lost her child. And in these suspended hours of the voyage, when life floats between sky and sea, amid the infinity of waves, all that she had been doing since the divorce, her public 'causes' and triumphs, the adulations with which she had been surrounded, began to seem to her barren and futile. No, she was not happy; what she had done had not answered; and she knew it.

One night, a night of calm air and silvery sea, she hung over the ship's side, dreaming rather miserably. The ship, aglow with lights, alive with movement, with talk, laughter, and music, glided on between the stars and the unfathomable depths of the mid-Atlantic. Nothing, to north and south, between her and the Poles; nothing but a few feet of iron and timber between her and the hungry gulfs in which the highest

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Alp would sink from sight. The floating palace, hung by Knowledge above Death, just out of Death's reach, suggested to her a number of melancholy thoughts and images. A touch of more than Arctic cold stole upon her, even through this loveliness of a summer night; she felt desperately unhappy and alone.

From the saloon came a sound of singing:

"An die Lippen wollt' ich pressen
Deine kleine weisse Hand,
Und mit Thränen sie benetzen
Deine kleine weisse Hand."

The tears came to her eyes. She remembered that she too, had once felt the surrender and the tenderness of love.

Then she brushed the tears away, angry with herself and determined to brood no more. But she looked round her in vain for a companion who might distract her. She had made no friends on board, and though she had brought with her a secretary and a maid, she kept them both at arm's length, and they never offered their society without an invitation.

What was she going to do? And why was she making this journey?

Because the injustice and absurdity of English law had distorted and besmirched her own perfectly legitimate action. They had given a handle to such harsh critics as Alfred Boyson. But she meant somehow to put herself right; and not only herself, but the great cause of woman's freedom and independence. No woman, in the better future that is coming, shall be forced either by law or opinion to continue the relations of marriage with a man she has come to despise.

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Marriage is merely proclaimed love; and if love fails, marriage has no further meaning or *raison d'être;* it comes, or should come, automatically to an end. This is the first article in the woman's charter, and without it marriage itself has neither value nor sanctity. She seemed to hear sentences of this sort, in her own voice, echoing about windy halls, producing waves of emotion on a sea of strained faces — women's faces, set and pale, like that of Madeleine Verrier. She had never actually made such a speech, but she felt she would like to have made it.

What was she going to do? No doubt Roger would resent her coming — would probably refuse to see her, as she had once refused to see him. Well, she must try and act with dignity and common sense; she must try and persuade him to recognise her good faith, and get him to listen to what she proposed. She had her plan for Roger's reclamation, and was already in love with it. Naturally, she had never meant permanently to hurt or injure Roger! She had done it for his good as well as her own. Yet even as she put this plea forward in the inner tribunal of consciousness, she knew that it was false.

'*You have murdered a life!*' Well, that was what prejudiced and hide-bound persons like Alfred Boyson said, and no doubt always would say. She could not help it; but for her own dignity's sake, that moral dignity in which she liked to feel herself enwrapped, she would give as little excuse for it as possible.

Then, as she stood looking eastward, a strange thought struck her. Once on that farther shore and she would be Roger's wife again — an English subject,

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and Roger's wife. How ridiculous, and how intolerable! When shall we see some real comity of nations in these matters of international marriage and divorce?

She had consulted her lawyers in New York before starting; on Roger's situation first of all, but also on her own. Roger, it seemed, might take certain legal steps, once he was aware of her being again on English ground. But, of course, he would not take them. 'It was never me he cared for — only Beatty!' she said to herself with a bitter perversity. Still the thought of returning within the range of the old obligations, the old life, affected her curiously. There were hours, especially at night, when she felt shut up with thoughts of Roger and Beatty — her husband and her child — just as of old.

How, in the name of justice, was she to blame for Roger's illness? Her irritable thoughts made a kind of grievance against him of the attack of pneumonia which she was told had injured his health. He must have neglected himself in some foolish way. The strongest men are the most reckless of themselves. In any case, how was it her fault?

One night she woke up suddenly, in the dawn, her heart beating tumultuously. She had been dreaming of her meeting — her possible meeting — with Roger. Her face was flushed, her memory confused. She could not recall the exact words or incidents of the dream, only that Roger had been in some way terrible and terrifying.

And as she sat up in her berth, trying to compose herself, she recalled the last time she had seen him at Philadelphia — a painful scene — and his last broken

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words to her, as he turned back from the door to speak them: —

'As to Beatty, I hold you responsible! She is my child, no less than yours. You shall answer to me! Remember that!'

Answer to him? Beatty was dead — in spite of all that love and science could do. Involuntarily she began to weep as she remembered the child's last days; the little choked cry, once or twice, for 'Daddy!' followed, so long as life maintained its struggle, by a childish anger that he did not come. And then the silencing of the cry, and the last change and settling in the small face, so instinct already with feeling and character, so prophetic of the woman to be.

A grief, of course, never to be got over; but for which she, Daphne, deserved pity and tenderness, not reproaches. She hardened herself to meet the coming trial.

She arrived in London in the first week of July, and her first act was to post a letter to Herbert French, addressed to his East-End vicarage, a letter formally expressed and merely asking him to give the writer 'twenty minutes' conversation on a subject of common interest to us both.' The letter was signed 'Daphne Floyd,' and a stamped envelope addressed to 'Mrs. Floyd' was enclosed. By return of post she received a letter from a person unknown to her, the curate, apparently, in charge of Mr. French's parish. The letter informed her that her own communication had not been forwarded, as Mr. French had gone away for a holiday after a threat of nervous breakdown

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in consequence of overwork; and business letters and interviews were being spared him as much as possible. 'He is, however, much better, I am glad to say, and if the subject on which you wish to speak to him is really urgent, his present address is Prospect House, St. Damian's, Ventnor. But unless it is urgent it would be a kindness not to trouble him with it until he returns to town, which will not be for another fortnight.'

Daphne walked restlessly up and down her hotel sitting-room. Of course the matter was urgent. The health of an East-End clergyman — already, it appeared, much amended — was not likely to seem of much importance to a woman of her temperament, when it stood in the way of her plans.

But she would not write, she would go. She had good reason to suppose that Herbert French would not welcome a visit from her; he might indeed very easily use his health as an excuse for not seeing her. But she must see him.

By mid-day she was already on her way to the Isle of Wight. About five o'clock she arrived at Ventnor, where she deposited maid and luggage. She then drove out alone to St. Damian's, a village a few miles north, through a radiant evening. The twinkling sea was alive with craft of all sizes, from the great liner leaving its trail of smoke along the horizon, to the white-sailed yachts close upon the land. The woods of the Undercliff sank softly to the blues and purple, the silver streaks and gorgeous shadows of the sea floor. The lights were broad and rich. After a hot day, coolness had come and the air was delightful.

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But Daphne sat erect, noticing nothing but the relief of the lowered temperature after her hot and tiresome journey. She applied herself occasionally to natural beauty, as she applied herself to music or literature, but it is not to women of her type that the true passion of it — 'the soul's bridegroom' — comes. And she was absorbed in thinking how she should open her business to Herbert French.

Prospect House turned out to be a detached villa standing in a garden, with a broad view of the Channel. Daphne sent her carriage back to the inn and climbed the steep drive which led up to the verandahed house. The front garden was empty, but voices — voices, it seemed, of children — came from behind the house where there was a grove of trees.

'Is Mr. Herbert French at home?' she asked of the maid who answered her bell.

The girl looked at her doubtfully.

'Yes, ma'am — but he does n't see visitors yet. Shall I tell Mrs. French? She's in the garden with the children.'

'No, thank you,' said Daphne, firmly. 'It's Mr. French I have come to see, and I am sure that he will wish to see me. Will you kindly give him my card? I will come in and wait.'

And she brushed past the maid, who was intimidated by the visitor's fashionable dress and by the drooping feathers of her Paris hat, in which the sharp olive-skinned face with its magnificent eyes was picturesquely framed. The girl gave way unwillingly, showed Mrs. Floyd into a small study looking on the front garden, and left her.

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'Elsie!' cried Herbert French, springing from the low chair in which he had been lounging in his shirt-sleeves with a book when the parlour-maid found him, 'Elsie!'

His wife, who was at the other end of the lawn, playing with the children, the boy on her back and a pair of girl twins clinging to her skirts, turned in astonishment and hurried back to him.

'Mrs. Floyd?' They both looked at the card in bewilderment. 'Who is it? Mrs. Floyd?'

Then French's face changed.

'What is this lady like?' he asked peremptorily of the parlour-maid.

'Well, sir, she's a dark lady, dressed very smart —'

'Has she very black eyes?'

'Oh yes, sir!'

'Young?'

The girl promptly replied in the negative, qualifying it a moment afterward by a perplexed 'Well, I should n't say so, sir.'

French thought a moment.

'Thank you. I will come in.'

He turned to his wife with a rapid question, under his breath.

'Where is Roger?'

Elsie stared at him, her colour paling.

'Herbert! — it can't — it can't —'

'I suspect it is — Mrs. Barnes,' said French slowly. 'Help me on with my coat, darling. Now then, what shall we do?'

'She can't have come to force herself on him!' cried his wife passionately.

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'Probably she knows nothing of his being here. Did he go for a walk?'

'Yes, towards Sandown. But he will be back directly.'

A quick shade of expression crossed French's face, which his wife knew to mean that whenever Roger was out by himself there was cause for anxiety. But the familiar trouble was immediately swallowed up in the new and pressing one.

'What can that woman have come to say?' he asked, half of himself, half of his wife, as he walked slowly back to the house. Elsie had conveyed the children to their nurse, and was beside him.

'Perhaps she repents!' The tone was dry and short; it flung a challenge to misdoing.

'I doubt it! But Roger?' French stood still, pondering. 'Keep him, darling — intercept him if you can. If he must see her, I will come out. But we must n't risk a shock.'

They consulted a little in low voices. Then French went into the house and Elsie came back to her children. She stood thinking, her fine face, so open-browed and purely lined, frowning and distressed.

'You wished to see me, Mrs. Barnes?'

French had closed the door of the study behind him and stood without offering to shake hands with his visitor, coldly regarding her.

Daphne rose from her seat, reddening involuntarily.

'My name is no longer what you once knew it, Mr. French. I sent you my card.'

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French made a slight inclination and pointed to the chair from which she had risen.

'Pray sit down. May I know what has brought you here?'

Daphne resumed her seat, her small hands fidgeting on her parasol.

'I wished to come and consult with you, Mr. French. I had heard a distressing account of — of Roger, from a friend in America.'

'I see,' said French, on whom a sudden light dawned. 'You met Boyson at Niagara — that I knew — and you are here because of what he said to you?'

'Yes, partly.' The speaker looked round the room, biting her lip, and French observed her for a moment. He remembered the foreign vivacity and dash, the wilful grace of her youth, and marvelled at her stiffened, pretentious air, her loss of charm. Instinctively the saint in him knew from the mere look of her that she had been feeding herself on egotisms and falsehoods, and his heart hardened. Daphne resumed: —

'If Captain Boyson has given you an account of our interview, Mr. French, it was probably a one-sided one. However, that is *not* the point. He *did* distress me very much by his account, which I gather came from you — of — of Roger, and although, of course, it is a very awkward matter for me to move in, I still felt impelled for old times' sake to come over and see whether I could not help you — and his other friends — and, of course, his mother —'

'His mother is out of the question,' interrupted French. 'She is, I am sorry to say, a helpless invalid.'

'Is it really as bad as that? I hoped for better news.

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Then I apply to you — to you chiefly. Is there anything that I could do to assist you, or others, to —'

'To save him?' French put in the words as she hesitated.

Daphne was silent.

'What is your idea?' asked French, after a moment. 'You heard, I presume, from Captain Boyson that my wife and I were extremely anxious about Roger's ways and habits; that we cannot induce him, or, at any rate, we have not yet been able to induce him, to give up drinking; that his health is extremely bad, and that we are sometimes afraid that there is now some secret in his life of which he is ashamed?'

'Yes,' said Daphne, fidgeting with a book on the table. 'Yes, that is what I heard.'

'And you have come to suggest something?'

'Is there no way by which Roger can become as free as I now am!' she said suddenly, throwing back her head.

'By which Roger can obtain his divorce from you — and marry again? None, in English law.'

'But there is — in Colonial law.' She began to speak hurriedly and urgently. 'If Roger were to go to New Zealand, or to Australia, he could, after a time, get a divorce for desertion. I know he could — I have enquired. It does n't seem to be certain what effect my action — the American decree, I mean — would have in an English colony. My lawyers are going into it. But at any rate there is the desertion and then' — she grew more eager — 'if he married abroad — in the Colony — the marriage would be valid. No one could say a word to him when he returned to England.'

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French looked at her in silence. She went on — with the unconscious manner of one accustomed to command her world, to be the oracle and guide of subordinates: —

'Could we not induce him to go? Could you not? Very likely he would refuse to see me; and, of course, he has, most unjustly to *me*, I think, refused to take any money from me. But the money might be provided without his knowing where it came from. A young doctor might be sent with him — some nice fellow who would keep him amused and look after him. At Heston he used to take a great interest in farming. He might take up land. I would pay anything — anything! He might suppose it came from some friend.'

French smiled sadly. His eyes were on the ground. She bent forward.

'I beg of you, Mr. French, not to set yourself against me! Of course' — she drew herself up proudly — 'I know what you must think of my action. Our views are different, irreconcilably different. You probably think all divorce wrong. We think, in America, that a marriage which has become a burden to either party is no marriage, and ought to cease. But that, of course' — she waved a rhetorical hand — 'we cannot discuss. I do not propose for a moment to discuss it. You must allow me my national point of view. But surely we can, putting all that aside, combine to help Roger?'

'To marry again?' said French, slowly. 'It can't, I fear, be done — what you propose — in the time. I doubt whether Roger has two years to live.'

Daphne started.

'Roger! — to live?' she repeated, in horror. 'What

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is really the matter? Surely nothing more than care and a voyage could set right?'

French shook his head.

'We have been anxious about him for some time. That terrible attack of septic pneumonia in New York, as we now know, left the heart injured and the lungs weakened. He was badly nursed, and his state of mind at the time — his misery and loneliness — left him little chance. Then the drinking habit, which he contracted during those wretched months in the States, has been of course sorely against him. However, we hoped against hope — Elsie and I — till a few weeks ago. Then some one, we don't know who, made him go to a specialist, and the verdict is — phthisis; not very advanced, but certain and definite. And the general outlook is not favourable.'

Daphne had grown pale.

'We must send him away!' she said imperiously. 'We must! A voyage, a good doctor, a dry climate, would save him, of course they would! Why, there is nothing necessarily fatal now in phthisis! Nothing! It is absurd to talk as though there were.'

Again French looked at her in silence. But as she had lost colour, he had gained it. His face, which the East End had already stamped, had grown rosy, his eyes sparkled.

'Oh, do say something! Tell me what you suggest?' cried Daphne.

'Do you really wish me to tell you what I suggest?'

Daphne waited, her eyes first imploring, then beginning to shrink. He bent forward and touched her on the arm.

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'Go, Mrs. Barnes, and ask your husband's forgiveness! What will come of it I do not know. But you, at least, will have done something to set yourself right — with God.'

The Christian and the priest had spoken; the low voice in its intensity had seemed to ring through the quiet sun-flooded room. Daphne rose, trembling with resentment and antagonism.

'It is you, then, Mr. French, who make it impossible for me to discuss — to help. I shall have to see if I can find some other means of carrying out my purpose.'

There was a voice outside. Daphne turned.

'Who is that?'

French ran to the glass door that opened on the verandah, and trying for an ordinary tone, waved somebody back who was approaching from without. Elsie came quickly round the corner of the house, calling to the newcomer.

But Daphne saw who it was and took her own course. She, too, went to the window, and, passing French, she stepped into the verandah.

'Roger!'

A man hurried through the dusk. There was an exclamation, a silence. By this time French was on the lawn, his wife's quivering hand in his. Daphne retreated slowly into the study and Roger Barnes followed her.

'Leave them alone,' said French, and putting an arm round his wife he led her resolutely away, out of sound and sight.

Barnes stood silent, breathing heavily and leaning

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on the back of a chair. The western light from a side window struck full on him. But Daphne, the wave of excitement spent, was not looking at him. She had fallen upon a sofa, her face was in her hands.

'What do you want with me?' said Roger at last. Then, in a sudden heat, 'By God, I never wished to see you again!'

Daphne's muffled voice came through her fingers.

'I know that. You need n't tell me so!'

Roger turned away.

'You'll admit it's an intrusion?' he said fiercely. 'I don't see what you and I have got to do with each other now.'

Daphne struggled for self-control. After all, she had always managed him in the old days. She would manage him now.

'Roger — I — I did n't come to discuss the past. That's done with. But — I heard things about you — that —'

'You did n't like?' he laughed. 'I'm sorry, but I don't see what you have to do with them.'

Daphne's hand fidgeted with her dress, her eyes still cast down.

'Could n't we talk without bitterness? Just for ten minutes? It was from Captain Boyson that I heard —'

'Oh, Boyson, was that it? And he got his information from French — poor old Herbert. Well, it's quite true. I'm no longer fit for your — or his — or anybody's society.'

He threw himself into an armchair, calmly took a cigarette out of a box that lay near, and lit it. Daphne

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at last ventured to look at him. The first and dominant impression was of something shrunken and diminished. His blue flannel suit hung loose on his shoulders and chest, his athlete's limbs. His features had been thinned and graved and scooped by fever and broken nights; all the noble line and proportion was still there, but for one who had known him of old the effect was no longer beautiful but ghastly. Daphne stared at him in dismay.

He on his side observed his visitor, but with a cooler curiosity. Like French he noticed the signs of change, the dying down of brilliance and of bloom. To go your own way, as Daphne had done, did not seem to conduce to a woman's good looks.

At last he threw in a dry interrogation.

'Well?'

'I came to try and help you,' Daphne broke out, turning her head away, 'to ask Mr. French what I could do. It made me unhappy —'

'Did it?' He laughed again. 'I don't see why. Oh, you need n't trouble yourself. Elsie and Herbert are awfully good to me. They're all I want, or at any rate,' he hesitated a moment, 'they're all I *shall* want— from now on. Anyway, you know there'd be something grotesque in your trying your hand at reforming me.'

'I did n't mean anything of the kind!' she protested, stung by his tone. 'I — I wanted to suggest something practical — some way by which you might — release yourself from me — and also recover your health.'

'Release myself from you?' he repeated. 'That's easier said than done. Did you mean to send me to the Colonies — was that your idea?'

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His smile was hard to bear. But she went on, choking, yet determined.

'That seems to be the only way — in English law. Why should n't you take it? The voyage, the new climate, would probably set you up again. You need only be away a short time.'

He looked at her in silence a moment, fingering his cigarette.

'Thank you,' he said at last, 'thank you. And I suppose you offered us money? You told Herbert you would pay all expenses? Oh, don't be angry! I did n't mean anything uncivil. But,' he raised himself with energy from his lounging position, 'at the same time, perhaps you ought to know that I would sooner die a thousand times over than take a single silver sixpence that belonged to you!'

Their eyes met, his quite calm, hers sparkling with resentment and pain.

'Of course I can't argue with you if you meet me in that tone,' she said passionately. 'But I should have thought —'

'Besides,' he interrupted her, 'you say it is the only way. You are quite mistaken. It is not the only way. As far as freeing me goes, you could divorce me tomorrow — here — if you liked. I have been unfaithful to you. A strange way of putting it — at the present moment — between you and me! But that's how it could appear in the English courts. And as to the "cruelty" — that would n't give *you* any trouble!'

Daphne had flushed deeply. It was only by a great effort that she maintained her composure. Her eyes avoided him.

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'Mrs. Fairmile?' she said in a low voice.

He threw back his head with a sound of scorn.

'Mrs. Fairmile! You don't mean to tell me, Daphne, to my face, that you ever believed any of the lies — forgive the expression — that you, and your witnesses, and your lawyers told in the States — that you bribed those precious newspapers to tell?'

'Of course I believed it!' she said fiercely. 'And as for lies, it was you who began them.'

'You *believed* that I had betrayed you with Chloe Fairmile?' He raised himself again, fixing his strange deep-set gaze upon her.

'I never said —'

'No! To that length you did n't quite go. I admit it. You were able to get your way without it.' He sank back in his chair again. 'No, my remark had nothing to do with Chloe. I have never set eyes on her since I left you at Heston. But — there was a girl, a shop-girl, a poor little thing, rather pretty. I came across her about six months ago — it does n't matter how. She loves me, she was awfully good to me, a regular little brick. Some day I shall tell Herbert all about her — not yet — though, of course, he suspects. She 'd serve your purpose, if you thought it worth while. But you won't —'

'You're — living with her — now?'

'No. I broke with her a fortnight ago, after I'd seen those doctors. She made me see them, poor little soul. Then I went to say good-bye to her, and she,' his voice shook a little, 'she took it hard. But it's all right. I'm not going to risk her life, or saddle her with a dying man. She's with her sister. She'll get over it.'

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He turned his head towards the window, his eyes pursued the white sails on the darkening blue outside.

'It's been a bad business, but it was n't altogether my fault. I saved her from some one else, and she saved me, once or twice, from blowing my brains out.'

'What did the doctors say to you?' asked Daphne, brusquely, after a pause.

'They gave me about two years,' he said, indifferently, turning to knock off the end of his cigarette. 'That does n't matter.' Then, as his eyes caught her face, a sudden animation sprang into his. He drew his chair nearer to her and threw away his cigarette. 'Look here, Daphne, don't let's waste time. We shall never see each other again, and there are a number of things I want to know. Tell me everything you can remember about Beatty that last six months — and about her illness, you understand — never mind repeating what you told Boyson, and he told me. But there's lots more, there must be. Did she ever ask for me? Boyson said you could n't remember. But you must remember!'

He came closer still, his threatening eyes upon her. And as he did so, the dark presence of ruin and death, of things damning and irrevocable, which had been hovering over their conversation, approached with him — flapped their sombre wings in Daphne's face. She trembled all over.

'Yes,' she said, faintly, 'she did ask for you.'

'Ah!' He gave a cry of delight. 'Tell me — tell me at once — everything — from the beginning!'

And held by his will, she told him everything — all the piteous story of the child's last days — sobbing

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herself; and for the first time making much of the little one's signs of remembering her father, instead of minimising and ignoring them, as she had done in the talk with Boyson. It was as though for the first time she were trying to stanch a wound instead of widening it.

He listened eagerly. The two heads — the father and mother — drew closer; one might have thought them lovers still, united by tender and sacred memories.

But at last Roger drew himself away. He rose to his feet.

'I'll forgive you much for that!' he said with a long breath. 'Will you write it for me some day — all you've told me?'

She made a sign of assent.

'Well, now, you must n't stay here any longer. I suppose you've got a carriage? And we must n't meet again. There's no object in it. But I'll remember that you came.'

She looked at him. In her nature the great deeps were breaking up. She saw him as she had seen him in her first youth. And, at last, what she had done was plain to her.

With a cry she threw herself on the floor beside him. She pressed his hand in hers.

'Roger, let me stay! Let me nurse you!' she panted. 'I did n't understand. Let me be your friend! Let me help! I implore — I implore you!'

He hesitated a moment, then he lifted her to her feet decidedly, but not unkindly.

'What do you mean?' he said, slowly. 'Do you

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mean that you wish us to be husband and wife again? You are, of course, my wife, in the eye of English law, at this moment.'

'Let me try and help you!' she pleaded again, breaking into bitter tears. 'I did n't — I did n't understand!'

He shook his head.

'You can't help me. I — I'm afraid I could n't bear it. We must n't meet. It — it's gone too deep.'

He thrust his hands into his pockets and walked away to the window. She stood helplessly weeping.

When he returned he was quite composed again.

'Don't cry so,' he said, calmly. 'It's done. We can't help it. And don't make yourself too unhappy about me. I've had awful times. When I was ill in New York — it was like hell. The pain was devilish, and I was n't used to being alone, and nobody caring a damn, and everybody believing me a cad and a bully. But I got over that. It was Beatty's death that hit me so hard, and that I was n't there. It's that, somehow, I can't get over — that you did it — that you could have had the heart. It would always come between us. No, we're better apart. But I'll tell you something to comfort you. I've given up that girl, as I've told you, and I've given up drink. Herbert won't believe it, but he'll find it is so. And I don't mean to die before my time. I'm going out to Switzerland directly. I'll do all the correct things. You see, when a man *knows* he's going to die, well,' he turned away, 'he gets uncommonly curious as to what's going to come next.'

He walked up and down a few turns. Daphne watched him.

'I'm not pious — I never was. But after all, the

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religious people profess to know something about it, and nobody else does. Just supposing it were true?'

He stopped short, looking at her. She understood perfectly that he had Beatty in his mind.

'Well, anyhow, I'm going to live decently for the rest of my time — and die decently. I'm not going to throw away chances. And don't trouble yourself about money. There's enough left to carry me through. Good-bye, Daphne!' he held out his hand to her.

She took it, still dumbly weeping. He looked at her with pity.

'Yes, I know, you did n't understand what you were doing. But you see, Daphne, marriage is —' he sought rather painfully for his words, 'it's a big thing. If it does n't make us, it ruins us; I did n't marry you for the best of reasons, but I was very fond of you — honour bright! I loved you in my way, I should have loved you more and more. I should have been a decent fellow if you'd stuck to me. I had all sorts of plans; you might have taught me anything. I was a fool about Chloe Fairmile, but there was nothing in it, you know there was n't. And now it's all rooted up and done with. Women like to think such things can be mended, but they can't — they can't, indeed. It would be foolish to try.'

Daphne sank upon a chair and buried her face in her hands. He drew a long and painful breath. 'I'm afraid I must go,' he said waveringly. 'I — I can't stand this any longer. Good-bye, Daphne, good-bye.'

She only sobbed, as though her life dissolved in grief. He drew near to her, and as she wept, hidden

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from him, he laid his hand a moment on her shoulder. Then he took up his hat.

'I'm going now,' he said in a low voice. 'I shan't come back till you have gone.'

She heard him cross the room, his steps in the verandah. Outside, in the summer dark, a figure came to meet him. French drew Roger's arm into his, and the two walked away. The shadows of the wooded lane received them.

A woman came quickly into the room.

Elsie French looked down upon the sobbing Daphne, her own eyes full of tears, her hands clasped.

'Oh, you poor thing!' she said, under her breath. 'You poor thing!' And she knelt down beside her and folded her arms round her.

So from the same heart that had felt a passionate pity for the victim, compassion flowed out on the transgressor. For where others feel the tragedy of suffering, the pure in heart realise with an infinitely sharper pain the tragedy of guilt.

END OF DAPHNE

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CANADIAN BORN

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TO CANADA

IN MEMORY OF A HAPPY JOURNEY

MAY–JUNE, 1908

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INTRODUCTION

THIS story is an 'impression' — the record of a swallow-flight from sea to sea. In 1908, after some seven weeks in the States, my daughter and I crossed the Canadian border line to Montreal, and an experience never to be forgotten opened upon us. We spent a week at Montreal, a week at Ottawa, and about another week between Toronto and Niagara, learning the A B C of a great country. Then one day at Toronto there came a Magician to our door, and he offered us a magic chariot, put us into it, and saw us off for the Unknown. In other words, one of the kindest of friends — a maker of Canada — brought his private car to Toronto, and into it we stepped, as its owners and mistresses, for eighteen of the happiest days that life can show. Through the vast wilderness of Northern Ontario we sped to Winnipeg and Manitoba; from Winnipeg through the Rockies to Vancouver; and from Vancouver back to Quebec. We rested at Winnipeg and Banff; at Field and Vancouver. The car and its two servants became our familiar friends. Day after day, through forest and prairie and mountain, I sat on the little platform behind the car, and at the rear of the train. Nothing between me and the vast Canadian landscape! One leant over the little railing to look closely at the white trilliums, or the gopher skipping from his hole, or yet another of the myriad lakes that ran, an endless chain, beside us. Or, with a glass, one swept

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the featureless distances of Alberta, and, suddenly, there swam into our ken the first peaks of the Rockies! As for the mountains: — but I have told it all as Elizabeth saw it, and infinitely more as there is to say, I will not attempt a second version here. The experiences and emotions of such a journey, its political and social talk, the stir of a world in birth, arising newly and wondrously out of a green and fertile emptiness that has been waiting all these ages, since its primeval oceans receded, for tardy and timid man to come and possess it: — these things are faintly reflected in the story of Elizabeth. If that story draw the fancy of any 'golden lad' or lass of English birth to the wide land that lies there in the West, expectant, — and I rejoice to know that it has so worked already, — I shall feel that I have paid a small, an infinitesimal fraction of a writer's debt to the Magician and to Canada.

MARY A. WARD.

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PART I

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ON THE ROAD TO RUPERT'S LAND

I feel I ought perhaps to apologise to an unknown author for reprinting this poem, which came to me through a newspaper cutting. But it is so expressive of a great movement that I could not resist the temptation — and I trust this acknowledgement may somehow reach him.

M. A. W.

'I can see the farmers seeding
By the brown Assiniboine,
And a-turnin' prairie gumbo
Into heaps of shining coin.
In the foothills of the Rockies
I can see the steers at rest,
And that's why in old Toronto
I'm a-pinin' for the West;
Where the sparkling sunbeams glance
All across the wide expanse
And the ozone in the breezes
Makes your pulses throb and dance.

'On the road to Rupert's Land
Are the boys that understand;
For in spring their feet are turning
To that free and fertile land.

'I can see the smacks a-fishing
On Lake Winnipeg so wide,
And the lumber steamers loading
By the humming sawmill's side.
I can see the silent redmen
As they row the livelong day
In the big fur-laden York boats
On the road to Hudson Bay.
And the lonely miners stand
To wash out the golden sand,
And the summer throw her lilies
Like a garment o'er the land.

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ON THE ROAD TO RUPERT'S LAND

'On the road to Rupert's Land
Are the girls that understand,
For when nations are a-building
You will find them close at hand.

'Put me somewhere west of Selkirk
When the prairie roses bloom,
Where you run clean out o' fences,
And a man has elbow room.
Let me ride upon the pilot
When the first through train goes out,
Let me hear the settlers welcome it
With joyous ringing shout.
Let me be upon the prairie
When they start a baby town,
When they're living under canvas
While the first mud-sills go down;
For it rarely stirs the blood
To see the cities in the bud,
And to feel a nation growing
From that sticky prairie mud.

'On the road to Rupert's Land
You will find a mighty band,
For they 're going West by thousands
Now they 've come to understand.'

— ANONYMOUS.

Toronto News, 1908.

[Rupert's Land is the old name for all the country between the Red River and the Rockies.]

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CANADIAN BORN

CHAPTER I

'I CALL this part of the line uncommonly boring!'

The speaker tossed his cigarette-end away as he spoke. It fell between the rails, and the tiny smoke from it curled up for a moment against the heavy background of spruce as the train receded.

'All the same, this is going to be one of the most exciting parts of Canada before long,' said Lady Merton, looking up from her guide-book. 'I can tell you all about it.'

'For heaven's sake, don't!' said her companion hastily. 'My dear Elizabeth, I really must warn you. You're losing your head.'

'I lost it long ago. To-day I am a bore — to-morrow I shall be a nuisance. Make up your mind to it.'

'I thought you were a reasonable person! — you used to be. Now look at that view, Elizabeth. We've seen the same thing for twelve hours, and if it was n't going to be dark we should see the same thing for twelve hours more. What is there to go mad over in that?' Her brother waved his hand indignantly from right to left across the disappearing scene. 'As for me, I am only sustained by the prospect of the good dinner that I know Yerkes means to give us in a quarter of an hour. I won't be a minute late for it! Go and get ready, Elizabeth —'

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'Another lake!' cried Lady Merton, with a jump. 'Oh, what a darling! That's the twentieth since tea. Look at the reflexions — and that delicious island! And oh! what *are* those birds?'

She leant over the side of the observation platform, attached to the private car in which she and her brother were travelling, at the rear of the heavy Canadian Pacific train. To the left of the train a small blue lake had come into view, a lake much indented, with small bays running up among the woods, and a couple of islands covered with scrub of beech and spruce, set sharply on the clear water. On one side of the lake, the forest was a hideous waste of burnt trunks, where the gaunt stems — charred or singed, snapped or twisted, or flayed — of the trees which remained standing, rose dreadfully into the May sunshine, above a chaos of black ruin below. But except for this blemish — the only sign of man — the little lake was a gem of beauty. The spring green clothed its rocky sides; the white spring clouds floated above it, and within it; and small beaches of white pebbles seemed to invite the human feet which had scarcely yet come near them.

'What does it matter?' yawned her brother. 'I don't want to shoot them. And why you make such a fuss about the lakes, when, as you say yourself, there are about two a mile, and none of them has got a name to its back, and they're all exactly alike, and all full of beastly mosquitoes in the summer, — it beats me! I wish Yerkes would hurry up.' He leant back sleepily against the door of the car and closed his eyes.

'It's *because* they have n't got a name — and

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they're so endless! — and the place is so big! — and the people so few! — and the chances are so many — and so queer!' said Elizabeth Merton laughing.

'What sort of chances?'

'Chances of the future.'

'Has n't got any chances!' said Philip Gaddesden, keeping his hands in his pockets.

'Has n't it? Owl!' Lady Merton neatly pinched the arm nearest to her. 'As I've explained to you many times before, this is the Hinterland of Ontario — and it's only been surveyed, except just along the railway, a few years ago — and it's as rich as rich —'

'I say, I wish you would n't reel out the guide-book like that!' grumbled the somnolent person beside her. 'As if I did n't know all about the Cobalt mines, and that kind of stuff.'

'Did you make any money out of them, Phil?'

'No — but the other fellows did. That's my luck.'

'Never mind, there'll be heaps more directly — hundreds.' She stretched out her hand vaguely towards an enchanting distance — hill beyond hill, wood beyond wood; everywhere the glimmer of water in the hollows; everywhere the sparkle of fresh leaf, the shining of the birch trunks among the firs, the greys and purples of limestone rock; everywhere, too, the disfiguring stain of fire, fire new or old, written, now on the mouldering stumps of trees felled thirty years ago when the railway was making, now on the young stems of yesterday.

'I want to see it all in a moment of time,' Elizabeth continued, still above herself. 'An air-ship, you know, Philip — and we should see it all in a day, from here

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to James Bay. A thousand miles of it — stretched below us — just waiting for man! And we'd drop down into an undiscovered lake, and give it a name, — one of our names — and leave a letter under a stone. And then in a hundred years, when the settlers come, they'd find it, and your name — or mine — would live for ever.'

'I forbid you to take any liberties with my name, Elizabeth! I've something better to do with it than waste it on a lake in — what do you call it? — the "Hinterland of Ontario."' The young man mocked his sister's tone.

Elizabeth laughed and was silent.

The train sped on, at its steady pace of some thirty miles an hour. The spring day was alternately sunny and cloudy; the temperature was warm, and the leaves were rushing out. Elizabeth Merton felt the spring in her veins, an indefinable joyousness and expectancy; but she was conscious also of another intoxication — a heat of romantic perception, kindled in her by this vast new country through which she was passing. She was a person of much travel, and many experiences; and had it been prophesied to her a year before this date that she could feel as she was now feeling, she would not have believed it. She was then in Rome, steeped in, ravished by the past, — assisted by what is, in its way, the most agreeable society in Europe. Here she was absorbed in a rushing present; held by the vision of a colossal future; and society had dropped out of her ken. Quebec, Montreal, and Ottawa had indeed made themselves pleasant to her; she had enjoyed them all. But it was in the wilderness that the spell had come

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upon her; in these vast spaces, some day to be the home of a new race; in these lakes, the playground of the Canada of the future; in these fur stations and scattered log cabins; above all in the great railway linking east and west, that she and her brother had come out to see.

For they had a peculiar relation to it. Their father had been one of its earliest and largest shareholders, might indeed be reckoned among its founders. He had been one, also, of a small group of very rich men who had stood by the line in one of the many crises of its early history, when there was often not enough money in the coffers of the company to pay the weekly wages of the navvies working on the great iron road. He was dead now, and his property in the line had been divided among his children. But his name and services were not forgotten at Montreal, and when his son and widowed daughter let it be known that they desired to cross from Quebec to Vancouver, and inquired what the cost of a private car might be for the journey, the authorities at Montreal insisted on placing one of the official cars at their disposal. So that they were now travelling as the guests of the C.P.R.; and the goodwill of one of the most powerful of modern corporations went with them.

They had left Toronto, on a May evening, when the orchards ran, one flush of white and pink, from the great lake to the gorge of Niagara, and all along the line northwards the white trilliums shone on the grassy banks in the shadow of the woods; while the pleasant Ontario farms flitted by, so mellowed and homelike already, midway between the old life of Quebec, and

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this new, raw West to which they were going. They had passed, also, — but at night and under the moon — through the lake country which is the playground of Toronto, as well known, and as plentifully benamed as Westmoreland; and then at North Bay with the sunrise they had plunged into the wilderness, — into the thousand miles of forest and lake that lie between Old Ontario and Winnipeg.

And here it was that Elizabeth's enthusiasm had become in her brother's eyes a folly; that something wild had stirred in her blood, and sitting there in her shady hat at the rear of the train, her eyes pursuing the great track which her father had helped to bring into being, she shook Europe from her, and felt through her pulses the tremor of one who watches at a birth, and looks forward to a life to be —

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'Dinner is ready, my lady.'

'Thank Heaven!' cried Philip Gaddesden, springing up. 'Get me some champagne, please, Yerkes.'

'Philip!' said his sister reprovingly, 'it is not good for you to have champagne every night.'

Philip threw back his curly head, and grinned.

'I'll see if I can do without it to-morrow. Come along Elizabeth.'

They passed through the outer saloon, with its chintz-covered sofas and chairs, past the two little bedrooms of the car, and the tiny kitchen, to the dining-room at the further end. Here stood a man in steward's livery ready to serve, while from the door of the kitchen another older man, thin and tanned, in a cook's white cap and apron, looked benevolently out.

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'Smells good, Yerkes!' said Gaddesden as he passed.

The cook nodded.

'If only her ladyship 'll find something she likes,' he said, not without a slight tone of reproach.

'You hear that, Elizabeth?' said her brother as they sat down to the well-spread board.

Elizabeth looked plaintive. It was one of her chief weaknesses to wish to be liked — adored, perhaps, is the better word — by her servants; and she generally accomplished it. But the price of Yerkes's affections was too high.

'It seems to me that we have only just finished luncheon, not to speak of tea,' she said, looking in dismay at the menu before her. 'Phil, do you wish to see me return home like Mrs. Melhuish?'

Phil surveyed his sister. Mrs. Melhuish was the wife of their local clergyman in Hampshire; a poor lady plagued by abnormal weight, and a heart disease.

'You might borrow pounds from Mrs. Melhuish, and nobody would ever know. You really are too thin, Lisa — a perfect scarecrow. Of course Yerkes sees that he could do a lot for you. All the same, that's a pretty gown you've got on — an awfully pretty gown,' he repeated with emphasis, adding immediately afterwards in another tone — 'Lisa! — I say! — you're not going to wear black any more?'

'No' — said Lady Merton, 'no — I am not going to wear black any more.' The words came lingeringly out, and as the servant removed her plate, Elizabeth turned to look out of window at the endless woods, a shadow on her beautiful eyes.

She was slenderly made, with a small face and head

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round which the abundant hair was very smoothly and closely wound. The hair was of a delicate brown; the complexion clear, but rather colourless. Among other young and handsome women, Elizabeth Merton made little effect; like a fine pencil drawing, she required an attentive eye. The modelling of the features, of the brow, the cheeks, the throat, was singularly refined, though without a touch of severity; her hands, with their very long and slender fingers, conveyed the same impression. Her dress, though dainty, was simple and inconspicuous, and her movements, light, graceful, self-controlled, seemed to show a person of equable temperament, without any strong emotions. In her light cheerfulness, her perpetual interest in the things about her, she might have reminded a spectator of some of the smaller sea-birds that flit endlessly from wave to wave, for whom the business of life appears to be summed up in flitting and poising.

The comparison would have been an inadequate one. But Elizabeth Merton's secrets were not easily known. She could rave of Canada; she rarely talked of herself. She had married, at the age of nineteen, a young Cavalry officer, Sir Francis Merton, who had died of fever within a year of their wedding, on a small West African expedition for which he had eagerly offered himself. Out of the ten months of their marriage, they had spent four together. Elizabeth was now twenty-seven, and her married life had become to her an insubstantial memory. She had been happy, but in the depths of the mind she knew that she might not have been happy very long. Her husband's piteous death had stamped upon her, indeed, a few sharp memories;

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she saw him always,— as the report of a brother officer, present at his funeral, had described him — wrapped in the Flag, and so lowered to his grave, in a desert land. This image effaced everything else; the weaknesses she knew, and those she had begun to guess at. But at the same time she had not been crushed by the tragedy; she had often scourged herself in secret for the rapidity with which, after it, life had once more become agreeable to her. She knew that many people thought her incapable of deep feeling. She supposed it must be true. And yet there were moments when a self within herself surprised and startled her; not so much, as yet, in connexion with persons, as with ideas, causes, — oppressions, injustices, helpless suffering; or, as now, with a new nation, visibly striking its 'being into bounds.'

During her widowhood she had lived much with her mother, and had devoted herself particularly to this only brother, a delicate lad, — loveable, self-indulgent, and provoking — for whom the unquestioning devotion of two women had not been the best of schools. An attack of rheumatic fever which had seized him on leaving Christ Church had scared both mother and sister. He had recovered, but his health was not yet what it had been; and as at home it was impossible to keep him from playing golf all day, and bridge all night, the family doctor, in despair, recommended travel, and Elizabeth had offered to take charge of him. It was not an easy task, for although Philip was extremely fond of his sister, as the male head of the family since his father's death, he held strong convictions with regard to the natural supremacy of man, and would probably

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never 'double Cape Turk.' In another year's time, at the age of four and twenty, he would inherit the family estate, and his mother's guardianship would come to an end. He then intended to be done with petticoat government, and to show these two dear women a thing or two.

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The dinner was good, as usual; in Elizabeth's eyes, monstrously good. There was to her something repellent in such luxurious fare enjoyed by strangers, on this tourist-flight through a country so eloquent of man's hard wrestle with rock and soil, with winter and the wilderness. The blinds of the car towards the next carriage were rigorously closed, that no one might interfere with the privacy of the rich; but Elizabeth had drawn up the blind beside her, and looked occasionally into the evening, and that endless medley of rock and forest and lake which lay there outside, under the sunset. Once she gazed out upon a great gorge, through which ran a noble river, bathed in crimson light; on its way, no doubt, to Lake Superior, the vast, crescent-shaped lake she had dreamed of in her schoolroom days, over her geography lessons, and was soon to see with her own eyes. She thought of the uncompanioned beauty of the stream, as it would be when the thunder of the train had gone by, of its distant sources in the wild, and the loneliness of its long, long journey. A little shiver stole upon her, the old tremor of man in presence of a nature not yet tamed to his needs, not yet identified with his feelings, still full therefore of stealthy and hostile powers, creeping unawares upon his life.

'This champagne is not nearly as good as last night,'

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said Philip discontentedly. 'Yerkes must really try for something better at Winnipeg. When do we arrive?'

'Oh, some time to-morrow evening.'

'What a blessing we 're going to bed!' said the boy, lighting his cigarette. 'You won't be able to bother me about lakes, Lisa.'

But he smiled at her as he spoke, and Elizabeth was so enchanted to notice the gradual passing away of the look of illness, the brightening of the eye, and slight filling out of the face, that he might tease her as he pleased.

Within an hour Philip Gaddesden was stretched on a comfortable bed sound asleep. The two servants had made up berths in the dining-room; Elizabeth's maid slept in the saloon. Elizabeth herself, wrapped in a large cloak, sat awhile outside, waiting for the first sight of Lake Superior.

It came at last. A gleam of silver on the left — a line of purple islands, — frowning headlands in front — and out of the interminable shadow of the forests, they swept into a broad moonlight. Over high bridges and the roar of rivers, threading innumerable bays, burrowing through headlands and peninsulas, now hanging over the cold shining of the water, now lost again in the woods, the train sped on its wonderful way. Elizabeth on her platform at its rear was conscious of no other living creature. She seemed to be alone with the night and the vastness of the lake, the awfulness of its black and purple coast. As far as she could see, the trees on its shores were still bare; they had temporarily left the spring behind; the North seemed to have rushed upon her in its terror and desolation. She found herself im-

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agining the storms that sweep the lake in winter, measuring her frail life against the loneliness and boundlessness around her. No sign of man, save in the few lights of these scattered stations; and yet, for long, her main impression was one of exultation in man's power and skill, which bore her on and on, safe, through the conquered wilderness.

Gradually, however, this note of feeling slid down into something much softer and sadder. She became conscious of herself, and her personal life; and little by little her exaltation passed into yearning; her eyes grew wet. For she had no one beside her with whom to share these secret thoughts and passions — these fresh contacts with life and nature. Was it always to be so? There was in her a longing, a 'sehnsucht' for she knew not what.

She could marry, of course, if she wished. There was a possibility in front of her, of which she sometimes thought. She thought of it now, wistfully and kindly; but it scarcely availed against the sudden melancholy, the passion of indefinite yearning which had assailed her.

The night began to cloud rapidly. The moonlight died from the lake and the coast. Soon a wind sprang up, lashing the young spruce and birch growing among the charred wreck of the older forest, through which the railway had been driven. Elizabeth went within, and she was no sooner in bed than the rain came pelting on her window.

She lay sleepless for a long time, thinking now, not of the world outside, or of herself, but of the long train in front of her, and its freight of lives; especially of the

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two emigrant cars, full, as she had seen at North Bay, of Galicians and Russian Poles. She remembered the women's faces, and the babies at their breasts. Were they all asleep, tired out perhaps by long journeying, and soothed by the noise of the train? Or were there hearts among them aching for some poor hovel left behind, for a dead child in a Carpathian graveyard? — for a lover? — a father? — some bowed and wrinkled Galician peasant whom the next winter would kill? And were the strong, swarthy men dreaming of wealth, of the broad land waiting, the free country, and the equal laws?

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Elizabeth awoke. Daylight in her little room. The train was at a standstill. Winnipeg?

A subtle sense of something wrong stole upon her. Why this murmur of voices round the train? She pushed aside a corner of the blind beside her. Outside a railway cutting, filled with misty rain — many persons walking up and down, and a babel of talk —

Bewildered, she rang for her maid, an elderly and precise person who had accompanied her on many wanderings.

'Simpson, what's the matter? Are we near Winnipeg?'

'We've been standing here for the last two hours, my lady. I've been expecting to hear you ring long ago.'

Simpson's tone implied that her mistress had been somewhat crassly sleeping while more sensitive persons had been awake and suffering.

Elizabeth rubbed her eyes. 'But what's wrong, Simpson, and where are we?'

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'Goodness knows, my lady. We're hours away from Winnipeg — that's all I know — and we're likely to stay here, by what Yerkes says.'

'Has there been an accident?'

Simpson replied — sombrely — that something had happened, she did n't know what — that Yerkes put it down to 'the sink-hole,' which according to him was 'always doing it' — that there were two trains in front of them at a standstill, and trains coming up every minute behind them.

'My dear Simpson! — that must be an exaggeration. There are n't trains every minute on the C. P. R. Is Mr. Philip awake?'

'Not yet, my lady.'

'And what on earth is a sink-hole?' asked Elizabeth.

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CHAPTER II

ELIZABETH had ample time during the ensuing sixteen hours for inquiry as to the nature of sink-holes.

When she emerged, dressed, into the saloon — she found Yerkes looking out of window in a brown study. He was armed with a dusting brush and a white apron, but it did not seem to her that he had been making much use of them.

'Whatever is the matter, Yerkes? What is a sink-hole?'

Yerkes looked round.

'A sink-hole, my lady?' he said slowly — 'A sink-hole, well it's as you may say — a muskeg.'

'A *what?*'

'A place where you can't find no bottom, my lady. This one's a vixen, she is! What she's cost the C.P. R.!' — he threw up his hands. 'And there's no contenting her — the more you give her the more she wants. They gave her ten trainloads of stuff a couple of months ago. No good! A bit of moist weather and there she is at it again. Let an engine and two carriages through last night — ten o'clock!'

'Gracious! Was anybody hurt? What — a kind of bog? — a quicksand?'

'Well,' said Yerkes, resuming his dusting, and speaking with polite obstinacy, 'muskegs is what they call 'em in these parts. They'll have to divert the line. I tell 'em so, scores of times. She was at this game last year. Held me up twenty-one hours last fall.'

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When Yerkes was travelling he spoke in a representative capacity. He *was* the line.

'How many trains ahead of us are there, Yerkes?'

'Two as I know on, — may be more.'

'And behind?'

'Three or four, my lady.'

'And how long are we likely to be kept?'

'Can't say. They 've been at her ten hours. She don't generally let any one over her under a good twenty — or twenty-four.'

'Yerkes! — what will Mr. Gaddesden say? And it's so damp and horrid.'

Elizabeth looked at the outside prospect in dismay. The rain was drizzling down. The passengers walking up and down the line were in heavy overcoats with their collars turned up. To the left of the line there was a misty glimpse of water over a foreground of charred stumps. On the other side rose a bank of scrubby wood, broken by a patch of clearing, which held a rude log-cabin. What was she to do with Philip all day?

Suddenly a cow appeared on the patch of grass round the log hut. With a sound of jubilation, Yerkes threw down his dusting brush and rushed out of the car. Elizabeth watched him pursue the cow, and disappear round a corner. What on earth was he about?

Philip had apparently not yet been called. He was asleep, and Yerkes had let well alone. But he must soon awake to the situation, and the problem of his entertainment would begin. Elizabeth took up the guidebook, and with difficulty made out that they were about a hundred miles from Winnipeg. Some-

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where near Rainy Lake apparently. What a foolishly appropriate name!

'Hi! — hi! —'

The shout startled her. Looking out she saw a group of passengers grinning, and Yerkes running hard for the car, holding something in his hand, and pursued by a man in a slouch hat, who seemed to be swearing. Yerkes dashed into the car, deposited his booty in the kitchen, and standing in the doorway faced the enemy. A terrific babel arose.

Elizabeth appeared in the passage and demanded to know what had happened.

'All right, my lady,' said Yerkes, mopping his forehead. 'I've only been and milked his cow. No saying where I'd have got any milk this side of Winnipeg if I had n't.'

'But, Yerkes, he does n't seem to like it.'

'Oh, that 's all right, my lady.'

But the settler was now on the steps of the car gesticulating and scolding, in what Elizabeth guessed to be a Scandinavian tongue. He was indeed a gigantic Swede, furiously angry, and Elizabeth had thoughts of bearding him herself and restoring the milk, when some mysterious transaction involving coin passed suddenly between the two men. The Swede stopped short in the midst of a sentence, pocketed something, and made off sulkily for the log hut. Yerkes, with a smile, and a wink to the bystanders, retired, triumphant, on his prey.

Elizabeth, standing at the door of the kitchen, inquired if supplies were likely to run short.

'Not in this car,' said Yerkes, with emphasis. 'What

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they'll do' — a jerk of his thumb towards the rest of the train in front — 'can't say.'

'Of course we shall have to give them food!' cried Lady Merton, delighted at the thought of getting rid of some of their superfluities.

Yerkes showed a stolid face.

'The C.P.R.'ll have to feed 'em — must. That's the regulation. Accident — free meals. That has n't nothing to do with me. They don't come poaching on my ground. I say, look out! Do yer call that bacon, or buffaler steaks?'

And Yerkes rushed upon his subordinate, Bettany, who was cutting the breakfast bacon with undue thickness, and took the thing in hand himself. The crushed Bettany, who was never allowed to finish anything, disappeared hastily in order to answer the electric bell which was ringing madly from Philip Gaddesden's berth.

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'Conductor!' cried a voice from the inner platform outside the dining-room and next the train.

'And what might you be wanting, sir?' said Bettany jauntily, opening the door to the visitor. Bettany was a small man, with thin harassed features and a fragment of beard, glib of speech towards everybody but Yerkes.

'Your conductor got some milk, I think, from that cabin.'

'He did, — but only enough for ourselves. Sorry we can't oblige you.'

'All the same, I am going to beg some of it. May I speak to the gentleman?'

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'Mr. Gaddesden, sir, is dressing. The steward will attend to you.'

And Bettany retired ceremoniously in favour of Yerkes, who hearing voices had come out of his den.

'I have come to ask for some fresh milk for a baby in the emigrant car,' said the stranger. 'Looks sick, and the mother's been crying. They've only got tinned milk in the restaurant, and the child won't touch it.'

'Very sorry it's that particular, sir. But I've got only what I want.'

'Yerkes!' cried Elizabeth Merton, in the background. 'Of course the baby must have it. Give it to the gentleman, please, at ónce.'

The stranger removed his hat and stepped into the tiny dining-room where Elizabeth was standing. He was tall and fair-skinned, with a blonde moustache, and very blue eyes. He spoke — for an English ear — with the slight accent which on the Canadian side of the border still proclaims the neighbourhood of the States.

'I am sorry to trouble you, madam,' he said, with deference. 'But the child seems very weakly, and the mother herself has nothing to give it. It was the conductor of the restaurant car who sent me here.'

'We shall be delighted,' said Lady Merton eagerly. 'May I come with you, if you are going to take it? Perhaps I could do something for the mother.'

The stranger hesitated a moment.

'An emigrant car full of Galicians is rather a rough sort of place — especially at this early hour in the morning. But if you don't mind —'

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'I don't mind anything. Yerkes, is that *all* the milk?'

'All to speak of, my lady,' said Yerkes, nimbly retreating into his den.

Elizabeth shook her head as she looked at the milk. But her visitor laughed.

'The baby won't get through that to-day. It's a regular little scarecrow. I should n't think the mother 'll rear it.'

They stepped out on to the line. The drizzle descended on Lady Merton's bare head, and grey travelling dress.

'You ought to have an umbrella,' said the Canadian, looking at her in some embarrassment. And he ran back to the car for one. Then, while she carried the milk carefully in both hands, he held the umbrella over her, and they passed through the groups of passengers who were strolling disconsolately up and down the line in spite of the wet, or exchanging lamentations with others from two more stranded trains, one drawn up alongside, the other behind.

Many glances were levelled at the slight Englishwoman, with the delicately pale face, and at the man escorting her. Elizabeth meanwhile was putting questions. How long would they be detained? Her brother with whom she was travelling was not at all strong. Unconsciously, perhaps, her voice took a note of complaint.

'Well, we can't any of us cross — can we? — till they come to some bottom in the sink-hole,' said the Canadian, interrupting her a trifle bluntly.

Elizabeth laughed. 'We may be here then till night.'

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'Possibly. But you'll be the first over.'

'How? There are some trains in front.'

'That does n't matter. They'll move you up. They're very vexed it should have happened to you.'

Elizabeth felt a trifle uncomfortable. Was the dear young man tilting at the idle rich — and the corrupt Old World? She stole a glance at him, but perceived only that in his own tanned and sunburnt way he was a remarkably handsome well-made fellow, built on a rather larger scale than the Canadians she had so far seen. A farmer? His manners were not countrified. But a farmer in Canada or the States may be of all social grades.

By this time they had reached the emigrant car, the conductor of which was standing on the steps. He was loth to allow Lady Merton to enter, but Elizabeth persisted. Her companion led the way, pushing through a smoking group of dark-faced men hanging round the entrance.

Inside, the car was thick, indeed, with smoke, and heavy with the exhalations of the night. Men and women were sitting on the wooden benches; some women were cooking in the tiny stove-room attached to the car; children, half-naked and unwashed, were playing on the floor; here and there a man was still asleep; while one old man was painfully conning a paper of 'Homestead Regulations' which had been given him at Montreal, a lad of eighteen helping him; and close by another lad was writing a letter, his eyes passing dreamily from the paper to the Canadian landscape outside, of which he was clearly not conscious. In a corner, surrounded by three or four other

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women, was the mother they had come to seek. She held a wailing baby of about a year old in her arms. At the sight of Elizabeth, the child stopped its wailing, and lay breathing fast and feebly, its large bright eyes fixed on the newcomer. The mother turned away abruptly. It was not unusual for persons from the parlour-cars to ask leave to walk through the emigrants.

But Elizabeth's companion said a few words to her, apparently in Russian, and Elizabeth, stooping over her, held out the milk. Then a dark face reluctantly showed itself, and great black eyes, in deep, lined sockets; eyes rather of a race than of a person, hardly conscious, hardly individualised, yet most poignant, expressing some feeling, remote and inarticulate, that roused Elizabeth's. She called to the conductor for a cup and a spoon; she made her way into the malodorous kitchen, and got some warm water and sugar; then kneeling by the child, she put a spoonful of the diluted and sweetened milk into the mother's hand.

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'Was it foolish of me to offer her that money?' said Elizabeth with flushed cheeks as they walked back through the rain. 'They looked so terribly poor.'

The Canadian smiled.

'I daresay it did n't do any harm,' he said indulgently. 'But they are probably not poor at all. The Galicians generally bring in quite a fair sum. And after a year or two they begin to be rich. They never spend a farthing they can help. It costs money — or time — to be clean, so they remain dirty. Perhaps we shall teach them — after a bit.'

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His companion looked at him with a shy but friendly curiosity.

'How did you come to know Russian?'

'When I was a child there were some Russian Poles on the next farm to us. I used to play with the boys, and learnt a little. The conductor called me in this morning to interpret. These people come from the Russian side of the Carpathians.'

'Then you are a Canadian yourself? — from the West?'

'I was born in Manitoba.'

'I am quite in love with your country!'

Elizabeth paused beside the steps leading to their car. As she spoke, her brown eyes lit up, and all her small features ran over, suddenly, with life and charm.

'Yes, it's a good country,' said the Canadian, rather dryly. 'It's going to be a great country. Is this your first visit?'

But the conversation was interrupted by a reproachful appeal from Yerkes.

'Breakfast, my lady, has been hotted twice.'

The Canadian looked at Elizabeth curiously, lifted his hat, and went away.

'Well, if this does n't take the cake!' said Philip Gaddesden, throwing himself disconsolately into an armchair. 'I bet you, Elizabeth, we shall be here forty-eight hours. And this damp goes through one.'

The young man shivered, as he looked petulantly out through the open doorway of the car to the wet woods beyond. Elizabeth surveyed him with some anxiety. Like herself he was small, and lightly built.

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But his features were much less regular than hers; the chin and nose were childishly tilted, the eyes too prominent. His bright colour, however (mother and sister could well have dispensed with that touch of vivid red on the cheeks!), his curly hair, and his boyish ways made him personally attractive; while in his moments of physical weakness, his evident resentment of Nature's treatment of him, and angry determination to get the best of her, had a touch of something that was pathetic — that appealed.

Elizabeth brought a rug and wrapped it round him. But she did not try to console him; she looked round for something or someone to amuse him.

On the line, just beyond the railed platform of the car, a group of men were lounging and smoking. One of them was her acquaintance of the morning. Elizabeth, standing on the platform, waited till he turned in her direction — caught his eye, and beckoned. He came with alacrity. She stooped over the rail to speak to him.

'I'm afraid you'll think it very absurd,' — her shy smile broke again — 'but — do you think there's any one in this train who plays bridge?'

He laughed.

'Certainly. There is a game going on at this moment in the car behind you.'

'Is it — is it anybody — we could ask to luncheon? — who'd come, I mean,' she added, hurriedly.

'I should think they'd come — I should think they'd be glad. Your cook, Yerkes, is famous on the line. I know two of the people playing. They are Members of Parliament.'

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'Oh! then perhaps I know them too,' cried Elizabeth, brightening.

He laughed again.

'The Dominion Parliament, I mean.' He named two towns in Manitoba, while Lady Merton's pink flush showed her conscious of having betrayed her English insularity. 'Shall I introduce you?'

'Please! — if you find an opportunity. It's for my brother. He's recovering from an illness.'

'And you want to cheer him up. Of course. Well, he'll want it to-day.' The young man looked round him, at the line strewn with unsightly débris, the ugly cutting which blocked the view, and the mists upcurling from the woods; then at the slight figure beside him. The corners of his mouth tried not to laugh. 'I am afraid you are not going to like Canada, if it treats you like this.'

'I've liked every minute of it up till now,' said Elizabeth warmly. 'Can you tell me — I should so like to know! — who all these people are?' She waved her hands towards the groups walking up and down.

'Well, you see —' said the Canadian after a moment's hesitation, 'Canada's a big place!'

He looked round upon her with a smile so broad and sudden that Elizabeth felt a heat rising in her cheeks. Her question had no doubt been a little naïve.

But the young man hurried on, composing his face quickly.

'Some of them, of course, are tourists like yourselves. But I know a few of them. That man in the clerical coat, and the round collar, is Father Henty, — a Je-

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suit well known in Winnipeg — a great man among the Catholics here.'

'But a disappointed one,' said Lady Merton.

The Canadian looked surprised. Elizabeth, proud of her knowledge, went on —

'Is n't it true that Catholics hoped to conquer the North-West,— and so — with Quebec — to govern you all? And now the English and American immigration has spoilt all their chances — poor things!'

'That's about it. Did they tell you that in Toronto?'

Elizabeth stiffened. The slight persistent tone of mockery in the young man's voice was beginning to offend her.

'And the others?' she said, without noticing his question.

It was the Canadian's turn to redden. He changed his tone.

'— The man next him is a professor at the Manitoba University. The gentleman in the brown suit is going to Vancouver to look after some big lumber leases he took out last year. And that little man in the Panama hat has been keeping us all alive. He's been prospecting for silver in New Ontario — thinks he's going to make his fortune in a week.'

'Oh, but that will do exactly for my brother!' cried Elizabeth, delighted. 'Please introduce us.'

And hurrying back into the car she burst upon the discontented gentleman within. Philip, who was just about to sally forth into the damp, against the entreaties of his servant, and take his turn of shying stones at a bottle on the line, was appeased by her report, and was soon seated, talking toy speculation,

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with a bronzed and brawny person, who watched the young Englishman, as they chatted, out of a pair of humorous eyes. Philip believed himself a great financier, but was not in truth either very shrewd or very daring, and his various coups or losses generally left his exchequer at the end of the year pretty much what it had been the year before. But the stranger, who seemed to have staked out claims at one time or another, across the whole face of the continent, from Klondyke to Nova Scotia, kept up a mining talk that held him enthralled; and Elizabeth breathed freely.

She returned to the platform. The scene was *triste*, but the rain had for the moment stopped. She hailed an official passing by, and asked if there was any chance of their soon going on. The man smiled and shook his head.

Her Canadian acquaintance, who was standing near, came up to the car as he heard her question.

'I have just seen a divisional superintendent. We may get on about nine o'clock to-night.'

'And it is now eleven o'clock in the morning,' sighed Lady Merton. 'Well! — I think a little exercise would be a good thing.'

And she descended the steps of the car. The Canadian hesitated.

'Would you allow me to walk with you?' he said, with formality. 'I might perhaps be able to tell you a few things. I belong to the railway.'

'I shall be greatly obliged,' said Elizabeth, cordially. 'Do you mean that you are an official?'

'I am an engineer — in charge of some construction work in the Rockies.'

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Lady Merton's face brightened.

'Indeed! I think that must be one of the most interesting things in the world to be.'

The Canadian's eyebrows lifted a little.

'I don't know that I ever thought of it like that,' he said, half smiling. 'It's good work — but I've done things a good deal livelier in my time.'

'You've not always been an engineer?'

'Very few people are always "anything" in Canada,' he said, laughing. 'It's like the States. One tries a lot of things. Oh, I was trained as an engineer — at Montreal. But directly I had finished with that I went off to Klondyke. I made a bit of money — came back — and lost it all, in a milling business — over there' — he pointed eastwards — 'on the Lake of the Woods. My partner cheated me. Then I went exploring to the north, and took a Government job at the same time — paying treaty money to the Indians. Then, five years ago, I got work for the C.P.R. But I shall cut it before long. I've saved some money again. I shall take up land, and go into politics.'

'Politics?' repeated Elizabeth, wishing she might some day know what politics meant in Canada.

'You're not married?' she added pleasantly.

'I am not married.'

'And may I ask your name?'

His name, it seemed, was George Anderson, and presently as they walked up and down he became somewhat communicative about himself, though always within the limits, as it seemed to her, of a natural dignity, which developed indeed as their acquaintance progressed. He told her tales, especially, of his Indian

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journeys through the wilds about the Athabasca and Mackenzie rivers, in search of remote Indian settlements — that the word of England to the red man might be kept; and his graphic talk called up before her the vision of a northern wilderness, even wilder and remoter than that she had just passed through, where yet the earth teemed with lakes and timber and trout-bearing streams, and where — 'we shall grow corn some day,' as he presently informed her. 'In twenty years they will have developed seed that will ripen three weeks earlier than wheat does now in Manitoba. Then we shall settle that country — right away! — to the far north.' His tone stirred and deepened. A little while before, it had seemed to her that her tourist enthusiasm amused him. Yet, by flashes, she began to feel in him something, beside which her own raptures fell silent. Had she, after all, hit upon a man — a practical man — who was yet conscious of the romance of Canada?

Presently she asked him if there was no one dependent on him — no mother — or sisters?

'I have two brothers — in the Government service at Ottawa. I had four sisters.'

'Are they married?'

'They are dead,' he said, slowly. 'They and my mother were burnt to death.'

She exclaimed. Her brown eyes turned upon him — all sudden horror and compassion.

'It was a farmhouse where we were living — and it took fire. Mother and sisters had no time to escape. It was early morning. I was a boy of eighteen, and was out on the farm doing my chores. When I saw the

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smoke and came back, the house was a burning mass, and — it was all over.'

'Where was your father?'

'My father is dead.'

'But he was there — at the time of the fire?'

'Yes. He was there.'

He had suddenly ceased to be communicative, and she instinctively asked no more questions, except as to the cause of the conflagration.

'Probably an explosion of coal-oil. It was sometimes used to light the fire with in the morning.'

'How very, very terrible!' she said gently, after a moment, as though she felt it. 'Did you stay on at the farm?'

'I brought up my two brothers. They were on a visit to some neighbours at the time of the fire. We stayed on three years.'

'With your father?'

'No; we three alone.'

She felt vaguely puzzled; but before she could turn to another subject, he had added —

'There was nothing else for us to do. We had no money and no relations — nothing but the land. So we had to work it — and we managed. But after three years we'd saved a little money, and we wanted to get a bit more education. So we sold the land and moved up to Montreal.'

'How old were the brothers when you took on the farm?'

'Thirteen — and fifteen.'

'Wonderful!' she exclaimed. 'You must be proud.'

He laughed out.

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'Why, that kind of thing's done every day in this country! You can't idle in Canada.'

They had turned back towards the train. In the doorway of the car sat Philip Gaddesden lounging and smoking, enveloped in a fur coat, his knees covered with a magnificent fur rug. A whiskey and soda had just been placed at his right hand. Elizabeth thought — 'He said that because he had seen Philip.' But when she looked at him, she withdrew her supposition. His eyes were not on the car, and he was evidently thinking of something else.

'I hope your brother will take no harm,' he said to her, as they approached the car. 'Can I be of any service to you in Winnipeg?'

'Oh, thank you. We have some introductions —'

'Of course. But if I can — let me know.'

An official came along the line, with a packet in his hand. At sight of Elizabeth he stopped and raised his hat.

'Am I speaking to Lady Merton? I have some letters here, that have been waiting for you at Winnipeg, and they've sent them out to you.'

He placed the packet in her hand. The Canadian moved away, but not before Elizabeth had seen again the veiled amusement in his eyes. It seemed to him comic, no doubt, that the idlers of the world should be so royally treated. But after all — she drew herself up — her father had been no idler.

She hastened to her brother; and they fell upon their letters.

'Oh, Philip!' — she said presently, looking up — 'Philip! Arthur Delaine meets us at Winnipeg.'

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'Does he? *Does he?*' repeated the young man, laughing. 'I say, Lisa! —'

Elizabeth took no notice of her brother's teasing tone. Nor did her voice, as she proceeded to read him the letter she held in her hand, throw any light upon her own feelings with regard to it.

The weary day passed. The emigrants were consoled by free meals; and the delicate baby throve on the Swede's ravished milk. For the rest, the people in the various trains made rapid acquaintance with each other; bridge went merrily in more than one car, and the general inconvenience was borne with much philosophy, even by Philip Gaddesden. At last, when darkness had long fallen, the train to which the private car was attached moved slowly forward amid the cheers of the bystanders.

Elizabeth and her brother were on the observation platform, with the Canadian, whom with some difficulty they had persuaded to share their dinner.

'I told you,' — said Anderson — 'that you would be passed over first.' He pointed to two other trains in front that had been shunted to make room for them.

Elizabeth turned to him a little proudly.

'But I should like to say — it's not for our own sakes — not in the least! — it is for my father, that they are so polite to us.'

'I know — of course I know!' was the quick response. 'I have been talking to some of our staff,' he went on, smiling. 'They would do anything for you. Perhaps you don't understand. You are the guests of

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the railway. And I too belong to the railway. I am a very humble person, but —'

'You also would do anything for us?' asked Elizabeth, with her soft laugh. 'How kind you all are!'

She looked charming as she said it, — her face and head lit up by the line of flaring lights through which they were slowly passing. The line was crowded with dark-faced navvies, watching the passage of the train as it crept forward.

One of the officials in command leapt up on the platform of the car, and introduced himself. He was worn out with the day's labour, but triumphant. 'It's all right now — but, my word! the stuff we've thrown in! —'

He and Anderson began some rapid technical talk. Slowly, they passed over the quicksand which in the morning had engulfed half a train; amid the flare of torches, and the murmur of strange speech, from the Galician and Italian labourers, who rested on their picks and stared and laughed, as they went safely by.

'How I love adventures!' cried Elizabeth, clasping her hands.

'Even little ones?' said the Canadian, smiling. But this time she was not conscious of any note of irony in his manner, rather of a kind protectingness, — more pronounced, perhaps, than it would have been in an Englishman, at the same stage of acquaintance. But Elizabeth liked it; she liked, too, the fine bare head that the torchlight revealed; and the general impression of varied life that the man's personality produced upon her. Her sympathies, her imagination were all trembling towards the Canadians, no less than towards their country.

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CHAPTER III

'Mr. Delaine, sir?'

The gentleman so addressed turned to see the substantial form of Simpson at his elbow. They were both standing in the spacious hall of the C.P.R. Hotel adjoining the station at Winnipeg.

'Her ladyship, sir, asked me to tell you she would be down directly. And would you please wait for her, and take her to see the place where the emigrants come. She does n't think Mr. Gaddesden will be down till luncheon-time.'

Arthur Delaine thanked the speaker for her information, and then sat down in a comfortable corner, *Times* in hand, to wait for Lady Merton.

She and her brother had arrived, he understood, in the early hours at Winnipeg, after the agitation and perils of the sink-hole. Philip had gone at once to bed and to slumber. Lady Merton would soon, it seemed, be ready for anything that Winnipeg might have to show her.

The newcomer had time, however, to realise and enjoy a pleasant expectancy before she appeared. He was apparently occupied with the *Times*, but in reality he was very conscious all the time of his own affairs and of a certain crisis to which, in his own belief, he had now brought them. In the first place, he could not get over his astonishment at finding himself where he was. The very aspect of the Winnipeg hotel, as he

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looked curiously round it, seemed to prove to him both the seriousness of certain plans and intentions of his own, and the unusual decision with which he had been pursuing them.

For undoubtedly, of his own accord, and for mere travellers' reasons, he would not at this moment be travelling in Canada. The old world was enough for him; and neither in the States nor in Canada had he so far seen anything which would of itself have drawn him away from his Cumberland house, his classical library, his pets, his friends and correspondents, his old servants, and all the other items in a comely and dignified way of life.

He was just forty and unmarried, a man of old family, easy disposition, and classical tastes. He had been for a time member of Parliament for one of the old Universities, and he was now engaged on a verse translation of certain books of the Odyssey. That this particular labour had been undertaken before did not trouble him. It was in fact his delight to feel himself a link in the chain of tradition — at once the successor and progenitor of scholars. Not that his scholarship was anything illustrious or profound. Neither as poet nor Hellenist would he ever leave any great mark behind him; but where other men talk of 'the household of faith,' he might have talked rather of 'the household of letters,' and would have seen himself as a warm and familiar sitter by its hearth. A new edition of some favourite classic; his weekly *Athenæum;* occasional correspondence with a French or Italian scholar, — (he did not read German, and disliked the race) — these were his pleasures. For the rest he was the land-

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lord of a considerable estate, as much of a sportsman as his position required, and his Conservative politics did not include any sympathy for the more revolutionary doctrines — economic or social — which seemed to him to be corrupting his party. In his youth, before the death of an elder brother, he had been trained as a doctor, and had spent some time in a London hospital. In no case would he ever have practised. Before his training was over he had revolted against the profession, and against the 'ugliness,' as it seemed to him, of the matters and topics with which a doctor must perforce be connected. His elder brother's death, which, however, he sincerely regretted, had in truth solved many difficulties.

In person he was moderately tall, with dark grizzled hair, agreeable features and a moustache. Among his aristocratic relations whom he met in London, the men thought him a little dishevelled and old-fashioned; the women pronounced him interesting and 'a dear.' His manners were generally admired, except by captious persons who held that such a fact was of itself enough to condemn them; and he was welcome in many English and some foreign circles. For he travelled every spring, and was well acquainted with the famous places of Europe. It need only be added that he had a somewhat severe taste in music and could render both Bach and Handel on the piano with success.

His property was only some six miles distant from Martindale Park, the Gaddesdens' home. During the preceding winter he had become a frequent visitor at Martindale, while Elizabeth Merton was staying with her mother and brother, and a little ripple of

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talk had begun to flow through the district. Delaine, very fastidious where personal dignity was concerned, could not make up his mind to be either watched or laughed at. He would have liked to woo — always supposing that wooing there was to be — with a maximum of dignity and privacy, surrounded by a friendly but not a forcing atmosphere. But Elizabeth Merton was a great favourite in her own neighbourhood, and people became impatient. Was it to be a marriage or was it not?

As soon as he felt this enquiry in the air, Mr. Delaine went abroad — abruptly — about a month before Elizabeth and her brother started for Canada. It was said that he had gone to Italy; but some few persons knew that it was his intention to start from Genoa for the United States, in order that he might attend a celebration at Harvard University in honour of a famous French Hellenist, who had covered himself with glory in Delaine's eyes by identifying a number of real sites with places mentioned in the Odyssey. Nobody, however, knew but himself, that, when that was done, he meant to join the brother and sister on part of their Canadian journey, and that he hoped thereby to become better acquainted with Elizabeth Merton than was possible — for a man at least of his sensitiveness — under the eyes of an inquisitive neighbourhood.

For this step Lady Merton's consent was of course necessary. He had accordingly written from Boston to ask if it would be agreeable to them that he should go with them through the Rockies. The proposal was most natural. The Delaines and Gaddesdens had been

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friends for many years, and Arthur Delaine enjoyed much fame as a travelling-companion — easy, accomplished and well-informed.

Nevertheless, he waited at Boston in some anxiety for Elizabeth's answer. When it came, it was all cordiality. By all means let him go with them to the Rockies. They could not, unfortunately, offer him sleeping-room in the car. But by day Lady Merton hoped he would be their guest, and share all their facilities and splendours. 'I shall be so glad of a companion for Philip, who is rapidly getting strong enough to give me a great deal of trouble.'

That was how she put it — how she must put it, of course. He perfectly understood her.

And now here he was, sitting in the C.P.R. Hotel at Winnipeg, at a time of year when he was generally in Paris or Rome, investigating the latest Greek acquisitions of the Louvre, or the last excavation in the Forum; picnicking in the Campagna; making expeditions to Assisi or Subiaco; and in the evenings frequenting the drawing-rooms of ministers and ambassadors.

He looked up presently from the *Times* and at the street outside; the new and raw street, with its large commercial buildings of the American type, its tramcars and crowded side-walks. The muddy roadway, the gaps and irregularities in the street façade, the windows of a great store opposite, displeased his eye. The whole scene seemed to him to have no atmosphere. As far as he was concerned, it said nothing, it touched nothing.

What was it he was to be taken to see? Emigration

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offices? He resigned himself, with a smile. The prospect made him all the more pleasantly conscious that one feeling, and one feeling only, could possibly have brought him here.

. . . . . .

'Ah! there you are.'

A light figure hurried towards him, and he rose in haste.

But Lady Merton was intercepted midway by a tall man, quite unknown to Delaine.

'I have arranged everything for three o'clock,' said the interloper. 'You are sure that will suit you?'

'Perfectly! And the guests?'

'Half-a-dozen, about, are coming.' George Anderson ran through the list, and Elizabeth laughed merrily, while extending her hand to Delaine.

'How amusing! A party! — and I don't know a soul in Winnipeg. Arrived this morning — and going this evening! So glad to see you, Mr. Arthur. You are coming, of course?'

'Where?' said Delaine, bewildered.

'To my tea this afternoon. Mr. Anderson — Mr. Delaine. Mr. Anderson has most kindly arranged a perfectly delightful party! — in our car this afternoon. We are to go and see a great farm belonging to some friend of his, about twenty miles out — prize cattle and horses — that kind of thing. Is n't it good of him?'

'Charming!' murmured Delaine. 'Charming!' His gaze ran over the figure of the Canadian.

'Yerkes of course will give us tea,' said Elizabeth. 'His cakes are a strong point': she turned to Anderson, 'and we may really have an engine?'

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'Certainly. We shall run you out in forty minutes. You still wish to go on to-night?'

'Philip does. Can we?'

'You can do anything you wish,' said Anderson, smiling.

Elizabeth thanked him, and they chatted a little more about the arrangements and guests for the afternoon, while Delaine listened. Who on earth was this new acquaintance of Lady Merton's? Some person she had met in the train apparently, and connected with the C.P.R. A good-looking fellow, a little too sure of himself; but that of course was the Colonial fault.

'One of the persons coming this afternoon is an old Montreal fellow-student of mine,' the Canadian was saying. 'He is going to be a great man some day. But if you get him to talk, you won't like his opinions — I thought I'd better warn you.'

'How very interesting!' put in Delaine, with perhaps excessive politeness. 'What sort of opinions? Do you grow any Socialists here?'

Anderson examined the speaker, as it were for the first time.

'The man I was speaking of is a French-Canadian,' he said, rather shortly, 'and a Catholic.'

'The very man I want to see,' cried Elizabeth. 'I suppose he hates us?'

'Who? — England? Not at all. He loves England — or says he does — and hates the Empire.'

'"Love me, love my Empire!"' said Elizabeth. 'But, I see — I am not to talk to him about the Boer War, or contributing to the Navy.'

'Better not,' laughed Anderson. 'I am sure he will

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want to behave himself; but he sometimes loses his head.'

Elizabeth sincerely hoped he might lose it at her party.

'We want as much Canada as possible, don't we?' She appealed to Delaine.

'To see, in fact, the "young barbarians — all at play!"' said Anderson. The note of sarcasm had returned to his clear voice. He stood, one hand on his hip, looking down on Lady Merton.

'Oh!' exclaimed Elizabeth, protesting; while Delaine was conscious of surprise that any one in the New World should quote anything.

Anderson hastily resumed. 'No, no. I know you are most kind, in wishing to see everything you can.'

'Why else should one come to the Colonies?' put in Delaine. Again his smile, as he spoke, was a little overdone.

'Oh, we must n't talk of Colonies,' cried Elizabeth, looking at Anderson; 'Canada, Mr. Arthur, does n't like to be called a colony.'

'What is she, then?' asked Delaine, with an amused shrug of the shoulders.

'She is a nation!' said the Canadian abruptly. Then, turning to Lady Merton, he rapidly went through some other business arrangements with her.

'Three o'clock then for the car. For this morning you are provided?' He glanced at Delaine.

Lady Merton replied that Mr. Delaine would take her round; and Anderson bowed and departed.

'Who is he, and how did you come across him?' asked Delaine, as they stepped into the street.

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Elizabeth explained, dwelling with enthusiasm on the kindness and ability with which the young man, since their acquaintance began, had made himself their courier. 'Philip, you know, is no use at all. But Mr. Anderson seems to know everybody — gets everything done. Instead of sending my letters round this morning he telephoned to everybody for me. And everybody is coming. Is n't it too kind! You know it is for Papa's sake' — she explained eagerly — 'because Canada thinks she owes him something.'

Delaine suggested that perhaps life in Winnipeg was monotonous, and its inhabitants might be glad of distractions. He also begged — with a slight touch of acerbity — that now that he had joined them he too might be made use of.

'Ah! but you don't know the country,' said Lady Merton gently. 'Don't you feel that we must get the natives to guide us — to put us in the way? It is only they who can really feel the poetry of it all.'

Her face kindled. Arthur Delaine, who thought that her remark was one of the foolish exaggerations of nice women, was none the less conscious as she made it, that her appearance was charming — all indeed that a man could desire in a wife. Her simple dress of white linen, her black hat, her lovely eyes, and little pointed chin, the bunch of white trilliums at her belt, which a child in the emigrant car had gathered and given her the day before — all her personal possessions and accessories seemed to him perfection. Yes! — but he meant to go slowly, for both their sakes. It seemed fitting and right, however, at this point that he should express his great pleasure and gratitude in being al-

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lowed to join them. Elizabeth replied simply, without any embarrassment that could be seen. Yet secretly both were conscious that something was on its trial, and that more was in front of them than a mere journey through the Rockies. He was an old friend both of herself and her family. She believed him to be honourable, upright, affectionate. He was of the same world and tradition as herself, well endowed, a scholar and a gentleman. He would make a good brother for Philip. And heretofore she had seen him on ground which had shown him to advantage; either at home or abroad, during a winter at Rome — a spring at Florence.

Indeed, as they strolled about Winnipeg, he talked to her incessantly about persons and incidents connected with the spring of the year before, when they had both been in Rome.

'You remember that delicious day at Castel Gandolfo? — on the terrace of the Villa Barberini? And the expedition to Horace's farm? You recollect the little girl there — the daughter of the Dutch minister? She's married an American — a very good fellow. They've bought an old villa on Monte Mario.'

And so on, and so on. The dear Italian names rolled out, and the speaker grew more and more animated and agreeable.

Only, unfortunately, Elizabeth's attention failed him. A motor car had been lent them in the hospitable Canadian way; and as they sped through and about the city, up the business streets, round the park, and the residential suburb rising along the Assiniboine, as they plunged through seas of black mud to look at

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the little old-fashioned Cathedral of St. John, with its graveyard recalling the earliest days of the settlement, Lady Merton gradually ceased even to pretend to listen to her companion.

'They have found some extremely jolly things lately at Porto d'Anzio — a fine torso — quite Greek.'

'Have they?' said Elizabeth absently — 'Have they? — And to think that in 1870, just a year or two before my father and mother married, there was nothing here but an outpost in the wilderness! — a few scores of people! One just *hears* this country grow.' She turned pensively away from the tombstone of an old Scottish settler in the shady graveyard of St. John.

'Ah! but what will it grow to?' said Delaine, dryly. 'Is Winnipeg going to be interesting? — Is it going to *matter?*'

'Come and look at the Emigration Offices,' laughed Elizabeth for answer.

And he found himself dragged through room after room of the great building, and standing by while Elizabeth, guided by an official who seemed to hide a more than Franciscan brotherliness under the aspects of a canny Scot, and helped by an interpreter, made her way into the groups of home-seekers crowding round the clerks and counters of the lower room — English, Americans, Swedes, Dutchmen, Galicians, French-Canadians. Some men, indeed, who were actually hanging over maps, listening to the directions and information of the officials, were far too busy to talk to tourists, but there were others who had finished their business, or were still waiting their turn,

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and among them, as also among the women, the little English lady found many willing to converse with her.

And what courage, what vivacity she threw into the business! Delaine, who had seen her till now as a person whose natural reserve was rather displayed than concealed by her light agreeable manner, who had often indeed had cause to wonder where and what might be the real woman, followed her from group to group in a silent astonishment. Between these people — belonging to the primitive earth-life — and herself, there seemed to be some sudden intuitive sympathy which bewildered him; whether she talked to some Yankee farmer from the Dakotas, long-limbed, lantern-jawed, all the moisture dried out of him by hot summers, hard winters, and long toil, who had come over the border with a pocket full of money, the proceeds of prairie-farming in a republic, to sink it all joyfully in a new venture under another flag; or to some broad-shouldered English youth from her own North Country; or to some hunted Russian from the Steppes, in whose eyes had begun to dawn the first lights of liberty; or to the dark-faced Italians and Frenchmen, to whom she chattered in their own tongues.

An Indian reserve of good land had just been thrown open to settlers. The room was thronged. But Elizabeth was afraid of no one; and no one repulsed her. The high official who took them through, lingered over the process, busy as the morning was, all for the *beaux yeux* of Elizabeth; and they left him pondering by what legerdemain he could possibly so manipulate his

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engagements that afternoon as to join Lady Merton's tea-party.

'Well, that was quite interesting!' said Delaine, cheerfully, as they emerged.

Elizabeth, however, would certainly have detected the perfunctoriness of the tone, and the hypocrisy of the speech, had she had any thoughts to spare.

But her face showed her absorbed.

'Is n't it *amazing!*' Her tone was quiet, her eyes on the ground.

'Yet, after all, the world has seen a good many emigrations in its day!' remarked Delaine, not without irritation.

She lifted her eyes.

'Ah — but nothing like this! One hears of how the young nations came down and peopled the Roman Empire. But that lasted so long. One person — with one life — could only see a bit of it. And here one sees it *all* — all, at once! — as a great march — the march of a new people to its home. Fifty years ago, wolves and bears, and buffaloes, — twelve years ago even, the great movement had not begun — and now, every week, a new town! — the new nation spreading, spreading over the open land, irresistibly, silently: no one setting bounds to it, no one knowing what will come of it!'

She checked herself. Her voice had been subdued, but there was a tremor in it. Delaine caught her up, rather helplessly.

'Ah! is n't that the point? What will come of it? Numbers and size are n't everything. Where is it all tending?'

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She looked up at him, still exalted, still flushed, and said softly, as though she could not help it, '"On to the bound of the waste — on to the City of God!"'

He gazed at her in discomfort. Here was an Elizabeth Merton he had yet to know. No trace of her in the ordinary life of an English country house!

'You *are* Canadian!' he said with a smile.

'No, no!' said Elizabeth eagerly, recovering herself, 'I am only a spectator. *We* see the drama — we feel it — much more than they can who are in it. At least'— she wavered — 'Well! — I have met one man who seems to feel it!'

'Your Canadian friend?'

Elizabeth nodded.

'He sees the vision — he dreams the dream!' she said brightly. 'So few do. But I think he does. Oh, dear — *dear!* — how time flies! I must go and see what Philip is after.'

Delaine was left discontented. He had come to press his suit, and he found a lady preoccupied. Canada, it seemed, was to be his rival! Would he ever be allowed to get in a word edgeways?

Was there ever anything so absurd, so disconcerting? He looked forward gloomily to a dull afternoon, in quest of fat cattle, with a carful of unknown Canadians.

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CHAPTER IV

At three o'clock, in the wide Winnipeg station, there gathered on the platform beside Lady Merton's car a merry and motley group of people. A Chief Justice from Alberta, one of the Senators for Manitoba, a rich lumberman from British Columbia, a Toronto manufacturer, — owner of the model farm which the party was to inspect, two or three ladies, among them a little English girl with fine eyes, whom Philip Gaddesden at once marked for approval; and a tall, dark-complexioned man with hollow cheeks, large ears, and a long chin, who was introduced, with particular emphasis, to Elizabeth by Anderson, as 'Mr. Félix Mariette' — member of parliament, apparently, for some constituency in the Province of Quebec.

The small crowd of persons collected, all eminent in the Canadian world, and some beyond it, examined their hostess of the afternoon with a kindly amusement. Elizabeth had sent round letters; Anderson, who was well known, it appeared, in Winnipeg, had done a good deal of telephoning. And by the letters and the telephoning this group of busy people had allowed itself to be gathered; simply because Elizabeth was her father's daughter, and it was worth while to put such people in the right way, and to send them home with some rational notions of the country they had come to see.

And she, who at home never went out of her way to

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make a new acquaintance, was here the centre of the situation, grasping the identities of all these strangers with wonderful quickness, flitting about from one to another, making friends with them all, and constraining Philip to do the same. Anderson followed her closely, evidently feeling a responsibility for the party only second to her own.

He found time, however, to whisper to Mariette, as they were all about to mount the car:—

'Eh bien?'

'Mais oui — très gracieuse!' said the other, but without a smile, and with a shrug of the shoulders. *He* was only there to please Anderson. What did the aristocratic Englishwoman on tour — with all her little Jingoisms and Imperialisms about her — matter to him, or he to her?

While the stream of guests was slowly making its way into the car, while Yerkes at the further end, resplendent in a buttonhole and a white cap and apron, was watching the scene, and the special engine, like an impatient horse, was puffing and hissing to be off, a man, who had entered the cloak-room of the station to deposit a bundle just as the car-party arrived, approached the cloak-room door from the inside, and looked through the glazed upper half. His stealthy movements and his strange appearance passed unnoticed. There was a noisy emigrant party in the cloak-room, taking out luggage deposited the night before; they were absorbed in their own affairs, and in some wrangle with the officials which involved a good deal of lost temper on both sides.

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The man was old and grey. His face, large-featured and originally comely in outline, wore the unmistakeable look of the outcast. His eyes were bloodshot, his mouth trembled, so did his limbs as he stood peering by the door. His clothes were squalid, and both they and his person diffused the odours of the drinking bar from which he had just come. The porter in charge of the cloak-room had run a hostile eye over him as he deposited his bundle. But now no one observed him; while he, gathered up and concentrated, like some old wolf upon a trail, followed every movement of the party entering the Gaddesden car.

George Anderson and his French-Canadian friend left the platform last. As Anderson reached the door of the car he turned back to speak to Mariette, and his face and figure were clearly visible to the watcher behind the barred cloak-room door. A gleam of savage excitement passed over the old man's face; his limbs trembled more violently.

Through the side windows of the car the party could be seen distributing themselves over the comfortable seats, laughing and talking in groups. In the dining-room, the white table-cloths spread for tea, with the china and silver upon it, made a pleasant show. And now two high officials of the railway came hurrying up, one to shake hands with Lady Merton and see that all was right, the other to accompany the party.

Elizabeth Merton came out in her white dress, and leant over the railing, talking, with smiles, to the official left behind. He raised his hat, the car moved slowly off, and in the group immediately behind Lady

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Merton the handsome face and thick fair hair of George Anderson showed conspicuous as long as the special train remained in sight.

The old man raised himself and noiselessly went out upon the platform. Outside the station he fell in with a younger man, who had been apparently waiting for him: a strong, picturesque fellow, with the skin and countenance of a half-breed.

'Well?' said the younger, impatiently. 'Thought you was goin' to take a bunk there.'

'Could n't get out before. It's all right.'

'Don't care if it is,' said the other sulkily. 'Don't care a damn button not for you nor anythin' you're after! But you give me my two dollars sharp, and don't keep me another half-hour waitin'. That's what I reckoned for, an' I 'm goin' to have it.' He held out his hand.

The old man fumbled slowly in an inner pocket of his filthy overcoat.

'You say the car's going on to-night?'

'It is, old bloke, and Mr. George Anderson same train — number ninety-seven — as ever is. Car shunted at Calgary to-morrow night. So none of your nonsense — fork out! I had a lot o' trouble gettin' you the tip.'

The old man put some silver into his palm with shaking fingers. The youth, who was a bar-tender from a small saloon in the neighbourhood of the station, looked at him with contempt.

'Wonder when you was sober last? Think you'd better clean yourself a bit, or they'll not let you on the train.'

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'Who told you I wanted to go on the train?' said the old man sharply. 'I'm staying at Winnipeg.'

'Oh! you are, are you?' said the other mockingly. 'We should n't cry our eyes out if you *was* sayin' good-bye. Ta-ta!' And with the dollars in his hand, head downwards, he went off like the wind.

The old man waited till the lad was out of sight, then went back into the station and bought an emigrant ticket to Calgary for the night train. He emerged again, and walked up the main street of Winnipeg, which on this bright afternoon was crowded with people and traffic. He passed the door of a solicitor's office where a small sum of money, the proceeds of a legacy, had been paid him the day before, and he finally made his way to the free library of Winnipeg, and took down a file of the *Winnipeg Chronicle.*

He turned some pages laboriously, yet not vaguely. His eyes were dim and his hands palsied, but he knew what he was looking for. He found it at last, and sat pondering it — the paragraph which, when he had hit upon it by chance in the same place twenty-four hours earlier, had changed the whole current of his thoughts.

'Donaldminster, Sask., May 6th. — We are delighted to hear from this prosperous and go-ahead town that, with regard to the vacant seat the Liberals of the city have secured as a candidate Mr. George Anderson, who achieved such an important success last year for the C.P.R. by his settlement on their behalf of the dangerous strike which had arisen in the Rocky Mountains section of the line, and which threatened not only to affect all the construction camps in the district, but to spread to the railway workers proper and to the whole

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Winnipeg section. Mr. Anderson seems to have a remarkable hold on the railway men, and he is besides a speaker of great force. He is said to have addressed twenty-three meetings, and to have scarcely eaten or slept for a fortnight. He was shrewd and fair in negotiation, as well as eloquent in speech. The result was an amicable settlement, satisfactory to all parties. And the farmers of the West owe Mr. Anderson a good deal. So does the C.P.R. For if the strike had broken out last October, just as the movement of the fall crops eastwards was at its height, the farmers and the railway, and Canada in general, would have been at its mercy. We wish Mr. Anderson a prosperous election (it is said, indeed, that he is not to be opposed) and every success in his political career. He is, we believe, Canadian born — sprung from a farm in Manitoba — so that he has grown up with the North-West, and shares all its hopes and ambitions.'

The old man, with both elbows on the table, crouched over the newspaper, incoherent pictures of the past coursing through his mind, which was still dazed and stupid from the drink of the night before.

Meanwhile the special train sped along the noble Red River and out into the country. All over the prairie the wheat was up in a smooth green carpet, broken here and there by the fields of timothy and clover, or the patches of summer fallow, or the white homestead buildings. The June sun shone down upon the teeming earth, and a mirage, born of sun and moisture, spread along the edge of the horizon, so that Elizabeth, the lake-lover, could only imagine in her bewilderment

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that Lake Winnipeg or Lake Manitoba had come dancing south and east to meet her, so clearly did the houses and trees, far away behind them, and on either side, seem to be standing at the edge of blue water, in which the white clouds overhead were mirrored, and reed-beds stretched along the shore. But as the train receded, the mirage followed them; the dream-water lapped up the trees and the fields, and even the line they had just passed over seemed to be standing in water.

How foreign to an English eye was the flat, hedgeless landscape! with its vast satin-smooth fields of bluish-green wheat; its farm-houses with their ploughed fire-guards and shelter-belts of young trees; its rare villages, each stretching in one long straggling line of wooden houses along the level earth; its scattered, treeless lakes, from which the duck rose as the train passed! Was it this mere foreignness, this likeness in difference, that made it strike so sharply, with such a pleasant pungency on Elizabeth's senses? Or was it something else — some perception of an opening future, not only for Canada, but for herself, mingling with the broad light, the keen air, the lovely strangeness of the scene?

Yet she scarcely spoke to Arthur Delaine, with whom one might have supposed this hidden feeling connected. She was indeed aware of him all the time. She watched him secretly; watching herself too in the characteristic modern way. But outwardly she was absorbed in talking with her guests.

The Chief Justice, roundly modelled, with a pink ball of a face set in white hair, had been half a century in Canada, and had watched the North-West grow

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from babyhood. He had passed his seventieth year, but Elizabeth noticed in the old men of Canada a strained expectancy, a buoyant hope, scarcely inferior to that of the younger generation. There was in Sir Michael's talk no hint of a Nunc Dimittis; rather a passionate regret that life was ebbing, and the veil falling over a national spectacle so enthralling, so dramatic.

'Before this century is out we shall be a people of eighty millions, and within measurable time this plain of a thousand miles from here to the Rockies will be as thickly peopled as the plain of Lombardy.'

'Well, and what then?' said a harsh voice in a French accent, interrupting the Chief Justice.

Arthur Delaine's face, turning towards the speaker, suddenly lightened, as though its owner said, 'Ah! precisely.'

'The plain of Lombardy is not a Paradise,' continued Mariette, with a laugh that had in it a touch of impatience.

'Not far off it,' murmured Delaine, as he looked out on the vast field of wheat they were passing — a field two miles long, flat and green and bare as a billiard-table — and remembered the chestnuts and the looping vines, the patches of silky corn and spiky maize, and all the interlacing richness and broidering of the Italian plain. His soul rebelled against this naked new earth, and its bare new fortunes. All very well for those who must live in it and make it. 'Yet is there better than it'! — lands steeped in a magic that has been woven for them by the mere life of immemorial generations.

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He murmured this to Elizabeth, who smiled.

'Their shroud?' she said, to tease him. 'But, Canada has on her wedding garment!'

Again he asked himself what had come to her. She looked years younger than when he had parted from her in England. The delicious thought shot through him that his advent might have something to do with it.

He stooped towards her.

'Willy-nilly, your friends must like Canada!' he said, in her ear, 'if it makes you so happy.'

He had no art of compliment, but the words were simple and sincere, and Elizabeth grew suddenly rosy, to her own great annoyance. Before she could reply, however, the Chief Justice had insisted on bringing her back into the general conversation.

'Come and keep the peace, Lady Merton! Here is my friend Mariette playing the devil's advocate as usual. Anderson tells me you are inclined to think well of us; so perhaps you ought to hear it.'

Mariette smiled and bowed — a trifle sombrely. He was plain and gaunt, but he had the air of a *grand seigneur*, and was in fact a member of one of the old seigneurial families of Quebec.

'I have been enquiring of Sir Michael, madame, whether he is quite happy in his mind as to all these Yankees that are now pouring into the new provinces. He, like every one else, prophesies great things for Canada; but suppose it is an American Canada?'

'Let them come,' said Anderson, with a touch of scorn. 'Excellent stuff! We can absorb them. We are doing it fast.'

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'Can you? They are pouring over all the new districts as fast as the survey is completed and the railways planned. They bring capital, which your Englishman does n't. They bring knowledge of the prairie and the climate, which your Englishmen have n't got. As for capital, America is doing everything: financing the railways, the mines, buying up the lands, and leasing the forests. British Columbia is only nominally yours; American capital and American business have got their grip firm on the very vitals of the province.'

'Perfectly true!' — put in the lumberman from Vancouver — 'They have three fourths of the forests in their hands.'

'No matter!' said Anderson, kindling. 'There was a moment of danger — twenty years ago. It is gone. Canada will no more be American than she will be Catholic — with apologies to Mariette. These Yankees come in — they turn Canadians in six months — they celebrate Dominion Day on the first of July, and Independence Day, for old sake's sake, on the fourth; and their children will be as loyal as Toronto.'

'Aye, and as dull!' said Mariette fiercely.

The conversation dissolved in protesting laughter. The Chief Justice, Anderson, and the lumberman fell upon another subject. Philip and the pretty English girl were flirting on the platform outside, Mariette dropped into a seat beside Elizabeth.

'You know my friend, Mr. Anderson, madame?'

'I made acquaintance with him on the journey yesterday. He has been most kind to us.'

'He is a very remarkable man. When he gets into

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the House, he will be heard of. He will perhaps make his mark on Canada.'

'You and he are old friends?'

'Since our student days. I was of course at the French College, — and he at McGill. But we saw a great deal of each other. He used to come home with me in his holidays.'

'He told me something of his early life.'

'Did he? It is a sad history, and I fear we — my family, that is, who are so attached to him — have only made it sadder. Three years ago he was engaged to my sister. Then the Archbishop forbade mixed marriages. My sister broke it off, and now she is a nun in the Ursuline Convent at Quebec.'

'Oh, poor things!' cried Elizabeth, her eye on Anderson's distant face.

'My sister is quite happy,' said Mariette sharply. 'She did her duty. But my poor friend suffered. However, now he has got over it. And I hope he will marry. He is very dear to me, though we have not a single opinion in the world in common.'

Elizabeth kept him talking. The picture of Anderson drawn for her by the admiring but always critical affection of his friend, touched and stirred her. His influence at college, the efforts by which he had placed his brothers in the world, the sensitive and generous temperament which had won him friends among the French-Canadian students, he remaining all the time English of the English; the tendency to melancholy — a personal and private melancholy — which mingled in him with a passionate enthusiasm for Canada, and Canada's future; Mariette drew these things for her, in

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a stately yet pungent French that affected her strangely, as though the French of Saint-Simon — or something like it — breathed again from a Canadian mouth. Anderson meanwhile was standing outside with the Chief Justice. She threw a glance at him now and then, wondering about his love affair. Had he really got over it? — or was that M. Mariette's delusion? She liked, on the contrary, to think of him as constant and broken-hearted!

. . . . . .

The car stopped, as it seemed, on the green prairie, thirty miles from Winnipeg. Elizabeth was given up to the owner of the great farm — one of the rich men of Canada for whom experiment in the public interest becomes a passion; and Anderson walked on her other hand.

Delaine endured a wearisome half-hour. He got no speech with Elizabeth, and prize cattle were his abomination. When the half-hour was done, he slipped away, unnoticed, from the party. He had marked a small lake or 'slough' at the rear of the house, with wide reed-beds and a clump of cotton-wood. He betook himself to the cotton-wood, took out his pocket Homer and a notebook, and fell to his task. He was in the thirteenth book: —

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀνὴρ δόρποιο λιλαίεται, ᾧ τε πανῆμαρ
νειὸν ἀν' ἕλκητον βόε οἴνοπε πηκτὸν ἄροτρον· . . .

'As when a man longeth for supper, for whom, the livelong day, two wine-coloured oxen have dragged the fitted plough through the fallow, and joyful to such an one is the going down of the sun that sends him to

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his meal, for his knees tremble as he goes — so welcome to Odysseus was the setting of the sun': . . .

He lost himself in familiar joy — the joy of the Greek itself, of the images of the Greek life. He walked with the Greek ploughman, he smelt the Greek earth, his thoughts caressed the dark oxen under the yoke. These for him had savour and delight; the wide Canadian fields had none.

Philip Gaddesden meanwhile could not be induced to leave the car. While the others were going through the splendid stables and cowsheds, kept like a queen's parlour, he and the pretty girl were playing at bob-cherry in the saloon, to the scandal of Yerkes, who, with the honour of the car and the C.P.R. and Canada itself on his shoulders, could not bear that any of his charges should shuffle out of the main item in the official programme.

But Elizabeth, as before, saw everything transfigured; the splendid Shire horses; the famous bull, progenitor of a coming race; the sheds full of glistening cows and mottled calves. These smooth, sleek creatures, housed there for the profit of Canada and her farm life, seemed to Elizabeth no less poetic than the cattle of Helios to Delaine. She loved the horses, and the patient, sweet-breathed kine; she found even a sympathetic mind for the pigs.

Presently when her host, the owner, left her to explain some of his experiments to the rest of the party, she fell to Anderson alone. And as she strolled at his side, Anderson found the June afternoon pass with extraordinary rapidity. Yet he was not really as forthcoming or as frank as he had been the day before. The

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more he liked his companion, the more he was conscious of differences between them which his pride exaggerated. He himself had never crossed the Atlantic; but he understood that she and her people were 'swells' — well-born in the English sense, and rich. Secretly he credited them with those defects of English society of which the New World talks — its vulgar standards and prejudices. There was not a sign of them certainly in Lady Merton's conversation. But it is easy to be gracious in a new country; and the brother was sometimes inclined to give himself airs. Anderson drew in his tentacles a little; ready indeed to be wroth with himself that he had talked so much of his own affairs to this little lady the day before. What possible interest could she have taken in them!

All the same, he could not tear himself from her side. Whenever Delaine left his seat by the lake, and strolled round the corner of the wood to reconnoitre, the result was always the same. If Anderson and Lady Merton were in sight at all, near or far, they were together. He returned, disconsolate, to Homer and the reeds.

As they went back to Winnipeg, some chance word revealed to Elizabeth that Anderson also was taking the night train for Calgary.

'Oh! then to-morrow you will come and talk to us!' cried Elizabeth, delighted.

Her cordial look, the pretty gesture of her head, evoked in Anderson a start of pleasure. He was not, however, the only spectator of them. Arthur Delaine, standing by, thought for the first time in his life that Elizabeth's manner was really a little excessive.

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The car left Winnipeg that night for the Rockies. An old man, in a crowded emigrant car, with a bundle under his arm, watched the arrival of the Gaddesden party. He saw Anderson accost them on the platform, and then make his way to his own coach just ahead of them.

The train sped westwards through the Manitoba farms and villages. Anderson slept intermittently, haunted by various important affairs that were on his mind, and by recollections of the afternoon. Meanwhile, in the front of the train, the paragraph from the *Winnipeg Chronicle* lay carefully folded in an old tramp's waistcoat pocket.

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CHAPTER V

I SAY, Elizabeth, you're not going to sit out there all day, and get your death of cold? Why don't you come in and read a novel like a sensible woman?'

'Because I can read a novel at home — and I can't see Canada.'

'See Canada! What is there to see?' The youth with the scornful voice came to lean against the doorway beside her. 'A patch of wheat — miles and miles of some withered stuff that calls itself grass, all of it as flat as your hand — oh! and, by Jove! a little brown fellow — gopher, is that their silly name? — scootling along the line. Go it, young 'un!' Philip shied the round end of a biscuit tin after the disappearing brown thing. — 'A boggy lake with a kind of salt fringe — unhealthy and horrid and beastly — a wretched farm building — et cetera, et cetera!'

'Oh! look there, Philip — there is a school!'

Elizabeth bent forward eagerly. On the bare prairie stood a small white house, like the house that children draw on their slates: a chimney in the middle, a door, a window on either side. Outside, about twenty children playing and dancing. Inside, through the wide open doorway a vision of desks and a few bending heads.

Philip's patience was put to it. Had she supposed that children went without schools in Canada?

But she took no heed of him.

'Look how lovely the children are, and how happy!

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What'll Canada be when they are old? And not another sign of habitation anywhere — nothing — but the little house — on the bare wide earth! And there they dance, as though the world belonged to them. So it does!'

'And my sister to a lunatic asylum!' said Philip, exasperated. 'I say, why does n't that man Anderson come and see us?'

'He promised to come in and lunch.'

'He's an awfully decent kind of fellow,' said the boy warmly.

Elizabeth opened her eyes.

'I did n't know you had taken any notice of him, Philip.'

'No more I did,' was the candid reply. 'But did you see what he brought me this morning?' He pointed to the seat behind him, littered with novels, which Elizabeth recognized as new additions to their travelling store. 'He begged or borrowed them somewhere from his friends or people in the hotel; told me frankly he knew I should be bored to-day and might want them. Rather 'cute of him, was n't it?'

Elizabeth was touched. Philip had certainly shown rather scant civility to Mr. Anderson, and this trait of thoughtfulness for a sickly and capricious traveller appealed to her.

'I suppose Delaine will be here directly?' Philip went on.

'I suppose so.'

Philip let himself down into the seat beside her.

'Look here, Elizabeth,' lowering his voice; 'I don't think Delaine is any more excited about Canada than

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I am. He told me last night he thought the country about Winnipeg perfectly hideous.'

'*Oh!*' cried Elizabeth, as though some one had flipped her.

'You'll have to pay him for this journey, Elizabeth. Why did you ask him to come?'

'I *did n't* ask him, Philip. He asked himself.'

'Ah! but you let him come,' said the youth shrewdly. 'I think, Elizabeth, you're not behaving quite nicely.'

'How am I not behaving nicely?'

'Well, you don't pay any attention to him. Do you know what he was doing while you were looking at the cows yesterday?'

Elizabeth reluctantly confessed that she had no idea.

'Well, he was sitting by a lake — a kind of swamp — at the back of the house, reading a book.' Philip went off into a fit of laughter.

'Poor Mr. Delaine!' cried Elizabeth, though she too laughed. 'It was probably Greek,' she added pensively.

'Well, that's funnier still. You know, Elizabeth, he could read Greek at home. It's because you were neglecting him.'

'Don't rub it in, Philip,' said Elizabeth, flushing. Then she moved up to him and laid a coaxing hand on his arm. 'Do you know that I have been awake half the night?'

'All along of Delaine? Shall I tell him?'

'Philip, I just want you to be a dear, and hold your tongue,' said Lady Merton entreatingly. 'When

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there's anything to tell, I'll tell you. And if I have —'

'Have what?'

'Behaved like a fool, you'll have to stand by me.' An expression of pain passed over her face.

'Oh, I'll stand by you. I don't know that I want Mr. Arthur for an extra bear-leader, if that's what you mean. You and mother are quite enough. Hullo! here he is.'

A little later Delaine and Elizabeth were sitting side by side on the garden chairs, four of which could just be fitted into the little railed platform at the rear of the car. Elizabeth was making herself agreeable, and doing it, for a time, with energy. Nothing also could have been more energetic than Delaine's attempts to meet her. He had been studying Baedeker, and he made intelligent traveller's remarks on the subject of Southern Saskatchewan. He discussed the American 'trek' into the province from the adjoining States. He understood the new public buildings of Regina were to be really fine, only to be surpassed by those at Edmonton. He admired the effects of light and shadow on the wide expanse; and noticed the peculiarities of the alkaline lakes.

Meanwhile, as he became more expansive, Elizabeth contracted. One would have thought soon that Canada had ceased to interest her at all. She led him slyly on to other topics, and presently the real Arthur Delaine emerged. Had she heard of the most recent Etruscan excavations at Grosseto? Wonderful! A whole host of new clues! Boni — Lanciani — the whole learned world in commotion. A fragment of

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what might very possibly turn out to be a bi-lingual inscription was the last find. Were we at last on the brink of solving the old, the eternal enigma?

He threw himself back in his chair, transformed once more into the talkative, agreeable person that Europe knew. His black and grizzled hair, falling perpetually forward in strong waves, made a fine frame for his grey eyes and large, well-cut features. He had a slight stammer, which increased when he was animated, and a trick of for ever pushing back the troublesome front locks of hair.

Elizabeth listened for a long, long time, and at last — could have cried like a baby because she was missing so much! There was a chance, she knew, all along this portion of the line, of seeing antelope and coyotes, if only one kept one's eyes open; not to speak of the gophers — enchanting little fellows, quite new to such travellers as she — who seemed to choose the very railway line itself, by preference, for their burrowings and their social gatherings. Then, as she saw, the wheat country was nearly done; a great change was in progress; her curiosity sprang to meet it. Droves of horses and cattle began to appear at rare intervals on the vast expanse. No white, tree-sheltered farms here like the farms in Manitoba; but scattered at long distances, near the railway or on the horizon, the first primitive dwellings of the new settlers — the rude 'shack' of the first year — beginnings of villages — sketches of towns.

'I have always thought the Etruscan problem the most fascinating in the whole world,' cried Delaine, with pleasant enthusiasm. 'When you consider all its bearings, linguistic and historical —'

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'Oh! *do* you see,' exclaimed Elizabeth, pointing — '*do* you see all those lines and posts, far out to the horizon? Do you know that all these lonely farms are connected with each other and the railway by *telephones*? Mr. Anderson told me so; that some farmers actually make their fences into telephone lines, and that from that little hut over there you can speak to Montreal when you please? And just before I left London I was staying in a big country house, thirty miles from Hyde Park Corner, and you could n't telephone to London except by driving five miles to the nearest town!'

'I wonder why that should strike you so much — the telephones, I mean?'

Delaine's tone was stiff. He had thrown himself back in his chair, with folded arms, and a slight look of patience 'After all, you know, it may be only one dull person telephoning to another dull person — on subjects of no importance!'

Elizabeth laughed and coloured.

'Oh! it is n't telephones in themselves. It's —' She hesitated, and began again, trying to express herself. 'When one thinks of all the haphazard of history — how nations have tumbled up, or been dragged up, through centuries of blind horror and mistake, how wonderful to see a nation made consciously! — before your eyes — by science and intelligence — everything thought for, everything foreseen! First of all, this wonderful railway, driven across these deserts, against opposition, against unbelief, by a handful of men, who risked everything, and have — perhaps! — changed the face of the world.'

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She stopped, smiling. In truth, her new capacity for dithyramb was no less surprising to herself than to Delaine.

'I return to my point' — he made it not without tartness — 'will the new men be adequate to the new state?'

'Won't they?' He fancied a certain pride in her bearing. 'They explained to me the other day at Winnipeg what the Government do for the emigrants — how they guide and help them — take care of them in sickness and in trouble, through the first years — protect them, really, even from themselves. And when one thinks how Governments have taxed, and tortured, and robbed, and fleeced! — Oh, surely, surely, the world improves!' She clasped her hands tightly on her knee, as though trying by the physical action to restrain the feeling within. 'And to see here the actual foundations of a great State laid under your eyes, deep and strong, by men who know what it is they are doing — to see history begun, on a blank page, by men who know what they are writing — is n't it wonderful, *wonderful!*'

'Dear lady!' said Delaine, smiling, 'America has been dealing with emigrants for generations; and there are people who say that corruption is rife in Canada.'

But Elizabeth would not be quenched.

'We come after America — we climb on her great shoulders to see the way. But is there anything in America to equal the suddenness of this? Twelve years ago even — in all this northwest — practically nothing. And then God said, "Let there be a nation!" — and there was a nation — in a night and a morning.'

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She waved her hand towards the great expanse of prairie. 'And as for corruption —'

'Well?' He waited maliciously.

'There is no great brew without a scum,' she said, laughing. 'But find me a brew anywhere in the world, of such power, with so little.'

'Mr. Anderson would, I think, be pleased with you,' said Delaine, dryly.

Elizabeth frowned a little.

'Do you think I learnt it from him? I assure you he never rhapsodises.'

'No; but he gives you the material for rhapsodies.'

'And why not?' said Elizabeth indignantly. 'If he did n't love the country and believe in it he would n't be going into its public life. You can feel that he is Canadian through and through.'

'A farmer's son, I think, from Manitoba?'

'Yes.' Elizabeth's tone was a little defensive.

'Will you not sometimes — if you watch his career — regret that, with his ability, he has not the environment — and the audience — of the Old World?'

'No, never! He will be one of the shapers of the new.'

Delaine looked at her with a certain passion.

'All very well, but *you* don't belong to it. We can't spare you from the old.'

'Oh, as for me, I'm full of vicious and corrupt habits!' put in Elizabeth hurriedly. 'I am not nearly good enough for the new!'

'Thank goodness for that!' said Delaine fervently, and, bending forward, he tried to see her face. But Elizabeth did not allow it. She could not help flushing;

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but as she bent over the side of the platform looking ahead, she announced in her gayest voice that there was a town to be seen, and it was probably Regina.

The station of Regina, when they steamed into it, was crowded with folk, and gay with flags. Anderson, after a conversation with the stationmaster, came to the car to say that the Governor-General, Lord Wrekin, who had been addressing a meeting at Regina, was expected immediately, to take the East-bound train; which was indeed already lying, with its steam up, on the further side of the station, the Vice-regal car in its rear.

'But there are complications. Look there!'

He pointed to a procession coming along the platform. Six men bore a coffin covered with white flowers. Behind it came persons in black, a group of men, and one woman; then others, mostly young men, also in mourning, and bareheaded.

As the procession passed the car, Anderson and Delaine uncovered.

Elizabeth turned a questioning look on Anderson.

'A young man from Ontario,' he explained, 'quite a lad. He had come here out West to a farm — to work his way — a good, harmless little fellow — the son of a widow. A week ago a vicious horse kicked him in the stable. He died yesterday morning. They are taking him back to Ontario to be buried. The friends of his chapel subscribed to do it, and they brought his mother here to nurse him. She arrived just in time. That is she.'

He pointed to the bowed figure, hidden in a long crape veil. Elizabeth's eyes filled.

'But it comes awkwardly,' Anderson went on,

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looking back along the platform — 'for the Governor-General is expected this very moment. The funeral ought to have been here half an hour ago. They seem to have been delayed. Ah! here he is!'

'Elizabeth! — his Excellency!' cried Philip, emerging from the car.

'Hush!' Elizabeth put her finger to her lip. The young man looked at the funeral procession in astonishment, which was just reaching the side of the empty van on the East-bound train which was waiting, with wide open doors, to receive the body. The bearers let down the coffin gently to the ground, and stood waiting in hesitation. But there were no railway employés to help them. A flurried stationmaster and his staff were receiving the official party. Suddenly some one started the revival hymn, 'Waiting by the River.' It was taken up vigorously by the thirty or forty young men who had followed the coffin, and their voices, rising and falling in a familiar lilting melody, filled the station.

'Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, beautiful river —
Gather with the Saints at the river,
That flows by the throne of God!'

Elizabeth looked towards the entrance of the station. A tall and slender man had just stepped on to the platform. It was the Governor-General with a small staff behind him. The staff and the station officials stood hat in hand. A few English tourists from the West-bound train hurried up; the men uncovered, the ladies curtsied. A group of settlers' wives, newly arrived from Minnesota, who were standing near the entrance, watched the arrival with curiosity. Lord

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Wrekin, seeing women in his path, saluted them; and they replied with a friendly and democratic nod. Then suddenly the Governor-General heard the singing, and perceived the black distant crowd. He inquired of the persons near him, and then passed on through the groups which had begun to gather round himself, raising his hand for silence. The passengers of the West-bound train had by now mostly descended, and pressed after him. Bareheaded, he stood behind the mourners while the hymn proceeded, and the coffin was lifted and placed in the car with the wreaths round it. The mother clung a moment to the side of the door, unconsciously resisting those who tried to lead her away. The kind grey eyes of the Governor-General rested upon her, but he made no effort to approach or speak to her. Only his stillness kept the crowd still.

Elizabeth at her window watched the scene — the tall figure of his Excellency — the bowed woman — the throng of officials and of mourners. Over the head of the Governor-General a couple of flags swelled in a light breeze — the Union Jack and the Maple Leaf; beyond the heads of the crowd there was a distant glimpse of the barracks of the Mounted Police; and then boundless prairie and floating cloud.

At last the mother yielded, and was led to the carriage behind the coffin. Gently, with bent head, Lord Wrekin made his way to her. But no one heard what passed between them. Then, silently, the funeral crowd dispersed, and another crowd — of officials and business men — claimed the Governor-General. Standing in its midst, he turned for a moment to scan the West-bound train.

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'Ah, Lady Merton!' He had perceived the car and Elizabeth's face at the window, and he hastened across to speak to her. They were old friends in England, and they had already met in Ottawa.

'So I find you on your travels! Well?'

His look, gay and vivacious as a boy's, interrogated hers. Elizabeth stammered a few words in praise of Canada. But her eyes were still wet, and the Governor-General perceived it.

'That was touching?' he said. 'To die in your teens in this country! — just as the curtain is up and the play begins — hard! Hullo, Anderson!'

The great man extended a cordial hand, chaffed Philip a little, gave Lady Merton some hurried but very precise directions as to what she was to see — and whom — at Vancouver and Pretoria. 'You must see So-and-so and So-and-so — great friends of mine. D—'ll tell you all about the lumbering. Get somebody to show you the Chinese quarter. And there's a splendid old fellow — a C.P.R. man — did some of the prospecting for the railway up North, towards the Yellowhead. Never heard such tales; I could have sat up all night.' He hastily scribbled a name on a card and gave it to Elizabeth. 'Good-bye — good-bye!'

He hastened off, but they saw him standing a few moments longer on the platform, the centre of a group of provincial politicians, farmers, railway superintendents, and others — his hat on the back of his head, his pleasant laugh ringing every now and then above the clatter of talk. Then came departure, and at the last moment he jumped into his carriage, talking and talked to, almost till it had left the platform.

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Anderson hailed a farming acquaintance.

'Well? What has the Governor-General been doing?'

'Speaking at a Farmers' Conference. Awful shindy yesterday! — between the farmers and the millers. Row about the elevators. The farmers want the Dominion to own 'em — vow they're cheated and bullied, and all the rest of it. Row about the railway too. Shortage of cars; you know the old story. A regular wasp's nest, the whole thing! Well, the Governor-General came this morning, and everything's blown over! Can't remember what he said, but we're all sure somebody's going to do something. Hope you know how he does it! — I don't.'

Anderson laughed as he sat down beside Elizabeth, and the train began to move.

'We seem to send you the right men!' she said, smiling — with a little English conceit that became her.

The train left the station. As it did so, an old man in the first emigrant car, who, during the wait at Regina, had appeared to be asleep in a corner, with a battered slouch hat drawn down over his eyes and face, stealthily moved to the window, and looked back upon the now empty platform.

Some hours later Anderson was still sitting beside Elizabeth. They were in Southern Alberta. The May day had darkened. And for the first time Elizabeth felt the chill and loneliness of the prairies, where as yet she had only felt their exhilaration. A fierce wind was sweeping over the boundless land, with showers in its

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train. The signs of habitation became scantier, the farms fewer. Bunches of horses and herds of cattle widely scattered over the endless grassy plains — the brown lines of the ploughed fire-guards running beside the railway — the bents of winter grass, white in the storm-light, bleaching the rolling surface of the ground, till the darkness of some cloud-shadow absorbed them: these things breathed — of a sudden — wildness and desolation. It seemed as though man could no longer cope with the mere vastness of the earth — an earth without rivers or trees, too visibly naked and measureless.

'At last I am afraid of it!' said Elizabeth, shivering in her fur coat, with a little motion of her hand towards the plain. 'And what it must be in winter!'

Anderson laughed.

'The winter is much milder here than in Manitoba! Radiant sunshine day after day — and the warm chinook-wind. And it is precisely here that the railway lands are selling at a higher price for the moment than anywhere else, and that settlers are rushing in. Look there!'

Elizabeth peered through the gloom, and saw the gleam of water. The train ran along beside it for a minute or two, then the gathering darkness seemed to swallow it up.

'A river?'

'No, a canal, fed from the Bow River — far ahead of us. We are in the irrigation belt— and in the next few years thousands of people will settle here. Give the land water — the wheat follows! South and North, even now, the wheat is spreading and driving out the

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ranchers. Irrigation is the secret. We are mastering it! And you thought' — he looked at her with amusement and a kind of triumph — 'that the country had mastered us?

There was something in his voice and eyes, as though not he spoke, but a nation through him. 'Splendid!' was the word that rose in Elizabeth's mind; and a thrill ran with it.

The gloom of the afternoon deepened. The showers increased. But Elizabeth could not be prevailed upon to go in. In the car Delaine and Philip were playing dominoes, in despair of anything more amusing. Yerkes was giving his great mind to the dinner which was to be the consolation of Philip's day.

Meanwhile Elizabeth kept Anderson talking. That was her great gift. She was the best of listeners. Thus led on he could not help himself, any more than he had been able to help himself on the afternoon of the sinkhole. He had meant to hold himself strictly in hand with this too attractive Englishwoman. On the contrary, he had never yet poured out so frankly to mortal ear the inmost dreams and hopes which fill the ablest minds of Canada — dreams half imagination, half science; and hopes which, yesterday romance, become reality to-morrow.

He showed her, for instance, the great Government farms as they passed them, standing white and trim upon the prairie, and bade her think of the busy brains at work there — magicians conjuring new wheats that will ripen before the earliest frosts, and so draw onward the warm tide of human life over vast regions now desolate; or trees that will stand firm against the prai-

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rie winds, and in the centuries to come turn this bare and boundless earth, this sea-floor of a primeval ocean, which is now Western Canada, into a garden of the Lord. Or from the epic of the soil, he would slip on to the human epic bound up with it — tale after tale of life in the ranching country, and of the emigration now pouring into Alberta — witched out of him by this delicately eager face, these lovely listening eyes. And here, in spite of his blunt, simple speech, came out the deeper notes of feeling, feeling richly steeped in those 'mortal things' — earthy, tender, humorous, or terrible — which make up human fate.

Had he talked like this to the Catholic girl in Quebec? And yet she had renounced him? She had never loved him, of course! To love this man would be to cleave to him.

Once, in a lifting of the shadows of the prairie, Elizabeth saw a group of antelope standing only a hundred yards from the train, tranquilly indifferent, their branching horns clear in a pallid ray of light; and once a prairie-wolf, solitary and motionless; and once, as the train moved off after a stoppage, an old badger leisurely shambling off the line itself. And once, too, amid a driving storm-shower, and what seemed to her unbroken, formless solitudes, suddenly, a tent by the railway side, and the blaze of a fire; and as the train slowly passed, three men — lads rather — emerging to laugh and beckon to it. The tent, the fire, the gay challenge of the young faces and the English voices, ringed by darkness and wild weather, brought the tears back to Elizabeth's eyes, she scarcely knew why.

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'Settlers, in their first year,' said Anderson, smiling, as he waved back again.

But to Elizabeth, it seemed a parable of the new Canada.

An hour later, amid a lightening of the clouds over the West, that spread a watery gold over the prairie, Anderson sprang to his feet.

'The Rockies!'

And there, a hundred miles away, peering over the edge of the land, ran from north to south a vast chain of snow peaks, and Elizabeth saw at last that even the prairies have an end.

The car was shunted at Calgary, in order that its occupants might enjoy a peaceful night. When she found herself alone in her tiny room, Elizabeth stood a while before her reflexion in the glass. Her eyes were frowning and distressed; her cheeks glowed. Arthur Delaine, her old friend, had bade her a cold good-night, and she knew well enough that — from him — she deserved it. 'Yet I gave him the whole morning,' she pleaded with herself. 'I did my best. But oh, why, why did I ever let him come!'

And even in the comparative quiet of the car at rest, she could not sleep; so quickened were all her pulses, and so vivid the memories of the day.

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CHAPTER VI

ARTHUR DELAINE was strolling and smoking on the broad wooden balcony, which in the rear of the hotel at Banff overlooks a wide scene of alp and water. The splendid Bow River comes swirling past the hotel, on its rush from the high mountains to the plains of Saskatchewan. Craggy mountains drop almost to the river's edge on one side; on the other, pine woods mask the railway and the hills; while in the distance shine the snow-peaks of the Rockies. It is the gateway of the mountains, fair and widely spaced, as becomes their dignity.

Delaine, however, was not observing the scenery. He was entirely absorbed by reflexion on his own affairs. The party had now been stationary for three or four days at Banff, enjoying the comforts of hotel life. The travelling companion on whom Delaine had not calculated in joining Lady Merton and her brother — Mr. George Anderson — had taken his leave, temporarily, at Calgary. In thirty-six hours, however, he had reappeared. It seemed that the construction work in which he was engaged in the C— valley did not urgently require his presence; that his position towards the railway, with which he was about to sever his official connexion, was one of great freedom and influence, owing, no doubt, to the services he had been able to render it the year before. He was, in fact, master of his time, and meant to spend it apparently in making Lady Merton's tour agreeable.

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For himself, Delaine could only feel that the advent of this stranger had spoilt the whole situation. It seemed now as though Elizabeth and her brother could not get on without him. As he leant over the railing of the balcony, Delaine could see far below, in the wood, the flutter of a white dress. It belonged to Lady Merton, and the man beside her was George Anderson. He had been arranging their walks and expeditions for the last four days, and was now about to accompany the English travellers on a special journey with a special engine through the Kicking Horse Pass and back, a pleasure suggested by the kindness of the railway authorities.

It was true that he had at one time been actively engaged on the important engineering work now in progress in the pass; and Lady Merton could not therefore have found a better showman. But why any showman at all? What did she know about this man who had sprung so rapidly into intimacy with herself and her brother? Yet Delaine could not honestly accuse him of presuming on a chance acquaintance, since it was not to be denied that it was Philip Gaddesden himself, who had taken an invalid's capricious liking to the tall fair-haired fellow, and had urgently requested — almost forced him to come back to them.

Delaine was not a little bruised in spirit, and beginning to be angry. During the solitary day he had been alone with them Elizabeth had been kindness and complaisance itself. But instead of that closer acquaintance, that opportunity for a gradual and delightful courtship on which he had reckoned, when the restraint of watching eyes and neighbourly tongues should be

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removed, he was conscious that he had never been so remote from her during the preceding winter at home, as he was now that he had journeyed six thousand miles simply and solely on the chance of proposing to her. He could not understand how anything so disastrous, and apparently so final, could have happened to him in one short week! Lady Merton — he saw quite plainly — did not mean him to propose to her, if she could possibly avoid it. She kept Philip with her, and gave no opportunities. And always, as before, she was possessed and bewitched by Canada! Moreover the Chief Justice and the French Canadian, Mariette, had turned up at the hotel two days before, on their way to Vancouver. Elizabeth had been sitting, figuratively, at the feet of both of them ever since; and both had accepted an invitation to join in the Kicking Horse party, and were delaying their journey West accordingly.

Instead of solitude, therefore, Delaine was aware of a most troublesome amount of society. Aware also, deep down, that some test he resented but could not escape had been applied to him on this journey, by fortune — and Elizabeth! — and that he was not standing it well. And the worst of it was that as his discouragement in the matter of Lady Merton increased, so also did his distaste for this raw, new country, without associations, without art, without antiquities, in which he should never, never have chosen to spend one of the summers of this short life, but for the charms of Elizabeth! And the more boredom he was conscious of, the less congenial and sympathetic, naturally, did he become as a companion for Lady Merton. Of this he

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was dismally aware. Well! he hoped, bitterly, that she knew what she was about, and could take care of herself. This man she had made friends with was good-looking and, by his record, possessed ability. He had fairly gentlemanly manners also; though, in Delaine's opinion, he was too self-confident on his own account, and too boastful on Canada's. But he was a man of humble origin, son of a farmer, who seemed, by the way, to be dead; and grandson, so Delaine had heard him say, through his mother, of one of the Selkirk settlers in 1812 — no doubt of some Scotch gillie or shepherd. Such a person, in England, would have no claim whatever to the intimate society of Elizabeth Merton. Yet here she was alone, really without protection — for what use was this young, scatter-brained brother? — herself only twenty-seven, and so charming! so much prettier than she had ever seemed to be at home. It was a dangerous situation, — a situation to which she ought not to have been exposed. Delaine had always believed her sensitive and fastidious; and in his belief all women should be sensitive and fastidious, especially as to who are, and who are not, their social equals. But it was clear he had not quite understood her. And this man whom they had picked up was undoubtedly handsome, strong, and masterful, of the kind that the natural woman admires. But then he — Delaine — had never thought of Elizabeth Merton as the natural woman. There lay the disappointment.

What was his own course to be? He believed himself defeated, but to show any angry consciousness of it would be to make life very uncomfortable in future,

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seeing that he and the Gaddesdens were inevitably neighbours and old friends. After all, he had not committed himself beyond repair. Why not resume the friendly relation which had meant so much to him before other ideas had entered in? Ah! it was no longer easy. The distress of which he was conscious had some deep roots. He must marry — the estate demanded it. But his temperament was invincibly cautious; his mind moved slowly. How was he to begin upon any fresh quest? His quiet pursuit of Elizabeth had come about naturally and by degrees. Propinquity had done it. And now that his hopes were dashed, he could not imagine how he was to find any other chance; for, as a rule, he was timid and hesitating with women. As he hung, in his depression, over the river, this man of forty envisaged — suddenly and not so far away — old age and loneliness. A keen and peevish resentment took possession of him.

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Lady Merton and Anderson began to ascend a long flight of steps leading from the garden path below to the balcony where Delaine stood.

Elizabeth waved to him, with smiles, and he must perforce watch her as she mounted side by side with the fair-haired Canadian.

'Oh! such delightful plans!' she said, as she sank out of breath into a seat. 'We have ordered the engine for two o'clock. Please observe, Mr. Arthur. Never again in this mortal life shall I be able to "order" an engine for two o'clock! — and one of these C.P.R. engines too, great splendid fellows! We go down the pass, and take tea at Field; and come up the pass

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again, this evening, to dine and sleep at Laggan. As we descend, the engine goes in front to hold us back; and when we ascend, it goes behind to push us up; and I understand the hill is even steeper' — she bent forward, laughing, to Delaine, appealing to their common North Country recollections — 'than the Shap incline!'

'Too steep, I gather,' said Delaine, 'to be altogether safe.' His tone was sharp. He stood with his back to the view, looking from Elizabeth to her companion.

Anderson turned.

'As we manage it, it is perfectly safe! But it costs us too much to make it safe. That's the reason for the new bit of line.'

Elizabeth turned away uncomfortably, conscious again, as she had often been before, of the jarring between the two men.

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At two o'clock the car and the engine were ready, and Yerkes received them at the station beaming with smiles. According to him, the privilege allowed them was all his doing, and he was exceedingly jealous of any claim of Anderson's in the matter.

'You come to *me*, my lady, if you want anything. Last year I ran a Russian princess through — official. "You take care of the Grand Duchess, Yerkes," they says to me at Montreal; for they know there is n't anybody on the line they can trust with a lady as they can me. Of course, I could n't help her faintin' at the high bridges, going up Rogers Pass; that was n't none of my fault!'

'Faint — at bridges!' said Elizabeth, with scorn.

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'I never heard of anybody doing such a thing, Yerkes.'

'Ah! you wait till you see 'em, my lady,' said Yerkes, grinning.

The day was radiant, and even Philip as they started from Banff station was in a Canadian mood. So far he had been quite cheerful and good-tempered, though not, to Elizabeth's anxious eye, much more robust yet than when they had left England. He smoked far too much, and Elizabeth wished devoutly that Yerkes would not supply him so liberally with whiskey and champagne. But Philip was not easily controlled. The very decided fancy, however, which he had lately taken for George Anderson had enabled Elizabeth, in one or two instances, to manage him more effectively. The night they arrived at Calgary, the lad had had a wild desire to go off on a moonlight drive across the prairies to a ranch worked by an old Cambridge friend of his. The night was cold, and he was evidently tired by the long journey from Winnipeg. Elizabeth was in despair, but could not move him at all. Then Anderson had intervened; had found somehow and somewhere a trapper just in from the mountains with a wonderful 'catch' of fox and marten; and in the amusement of turning over a bundle of magnificent furs, and of buying something straight from the hunter for his mother, the youth had forgotten his waywardness. Behind his back, Elizabeth had warmly thanked her lieutenant.

'He only wanted a little distraction,' Anderson had said, with a shy smile, as though he both liked and disliked her thanks. And then, impulsively, she had told him a good deal about Philip and his illness, and their mother, and the old house in Cumberland. She

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of all persons to be so communicative about the family affairs to a stranger! Was it that two days in a private car in Canada went as far as a month's acquaintance elsewhere?

Another passenger had been introduced to Lady Merton by Anderson, an hour before the departure of the car, and had made such a pleasant impression on her that he also had been asked to join the party. This was the American, Mr. Val Morton, now the official receiver, so Elizabeth understood, of a great railway system in the middle west of the United States. The railway had been handed over to him in a bankrupt condition. His energy and probity were engaged in pulling it through. More connexions between it and the Albertan railways were required; and he was in Canada, looking round and negotiating. He was already known to the Chief Justice and Mariette, and Elizabeth fell quickly in love with his white hair, his black eyes, his rapier-like slenderness and keenness, and that pleasant mingling in him — so common in the men of his race — of the dry shrewdness of the financier with a kind of headlong courtesy to women.

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On sped the car through the gate of the Rockies. The mountains grew deeper, the snows deeper against the blue, the air more dazzling, the forests closer, breathing balm into the sunshine.

Suddenly the car slackened and stopped. No sign of a station. Only a rustic archway, on which was written 'The Great Divide,' and beneath the archway two small brooklets issuing, one flowing to the right, the other to the left.

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They all left the car and stood round the tiny streams. They were on the watershed. The water in the one streamlet flowed to the Atlantic, that in its fellow to the Pacific.

Eternal parable of small beginnings and vast fates! But in this setting of untrodden mountains, and beside this railway which now for a few short years had been running its parlour and dining cars, its telegraphs and electric lights and hotels, a winding thread of life and civilisation, through the lonely and savage splendours of snow-peak and rock, transforming day by day the destinies of Canada — the parable became a truth, proved upon the pulses of men.

The party sat down on the grass beside the bright, rippling water, and Yerkes brought them coffee. While they were taking it, the two engine-drivers descended from the cab of the engine and began to gather a few flowers and twigs from spring bushes that grew near. They put them together and offered them to Lady Merton. She, going to speak to them, found that they were English and North Country.

'Philip! — Mr. Arthur! — they come from our side of Carlisle!'

Philip looked up with a careless nod and smile. Delaine rose and went to join her. A lively conversation sprang up between her and the two men. They were, it seemed, a stalwart pair of friends, kinsmen indeed, who generally worked together, and were now entrusted with some of the most important work on the most difficult sections of the line. But they were not going to spend all their days on the line — not they! Like everybody in the West, they had their eyes on the land.

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Upon a particular district of it, moreover, in Northern Alberta, not yet surveyed or settled. But they were watching it, and as soon as the 'steel gang' of a projected railway came within measurable distance they meant to claim their sections and work their land together.

When the conversation came to an end, and Elizabeth, who with her companions had been strolling along the line a little in front of the train, turned back towards her party, Delaine looked down upon her, at once anxious to strike the right note, and moodily despondent of doing it.

'Evidently, two very good fellows!' he said in his rich ponderous voice. 'You gave them a great pleasure by going to talk to them.'

'I?' cried Elizabeth. 'They are a perfect pair of gentlemen! — and it is very kind of them to drive us!'

Delaine laughed uneasily.

'The gradations here are bewildering — or rather the absence of gradations.'

'One gets down to the real thing,' said Elizabeth, rather hotly.

Delaine laughed again, with a touch of bitterness.

'The real thing? What kind of reality? There are all sorts.'

Elizabeth was suddenly conscious of a soreness in his tone. She tried to walk warily.

'I was only thinking,' she protested, 'of the chances a man gets in this country of showing what is in him.'

'Remember, too,' said Delaine, with spirit, 'the chances that he misses!'

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'The chances that belong only to the old countries? I am rather bored with them!' said Elizabeth flippantly.

Delaine forced a smile.

'Poor Old World! I wonder if you will ever be fair to it again, or — or to the people bound up with it!'

She looked at him, a little discomposed, and said, smiling: —

'Wait till you meet me next in Rome!'

'Shall I ever meet you again in Rome?' he replied, under his breath, as though involuntarily.

As he spoke he made a determined pause, a stone's throw from the rippling stream that marks the watershed; and Elizabeth must needs pause with him. Beyond the stream, Philip sat lounging among rugs and cushions brought from the car, Anderson and the American beside him. Anderson's fair uncovered head and broad shoulders were strongly thrown out against the glistening snows of the background. Upon the three typical figures — the frail English boy — the Canadian — the spare New Yorker — there shone an indescribable brilliance of light. The energy of the mountain sunshine and the mountain air seemed to throb and quiver through the persons talking — through Anderson's face, and his eyes fixed upon Elizabeth — through the sunlit water — the sparkling grasses — the shimmering spectacle of mountain and summer cloud that begirt them.

'Dear Mr. Arthur, of course we shall meet again in Rome!' said Elizabeth, rosy, and not knowing in truth what to say. 'This place has turned my head a little!' — she looked round her, raising her hand to the spec-

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tacle as though in pretty appeal to him to share her own exhilaration — 'but it will be all over so soon — and you *know* I don't forget old friends — or old pleasures.'

Her voice wavered a little. He looked at her, with parted lips, and a rather hostile, heated expression; then drew back, alarmed at his own temerity.

'Of course I know it! You must forgive a bookworm his grumble. Shall I help you over the stream?'

But she stepped across the tiny streamlet without giving him her hand.

As they rejoined the three on the grass, Morton, the Chief Justice, and Mariette returned from a saunter in the course of which they too had been chatting to the engine-drivers.

'I know the part of the country those men want,' the American was saying. 'I was all over Alberta last fall — part of it in a motor car. We jumped about those stubble fields in a way to make a leopard jealous! Every bone in my body was sore for weeks afterwards. But it was worth while. That 's a country!' — he threw up his hands. 'I was at Edmonton on the day when the last Government lands, the odd numbers, were thrown open. I saw the siege of the land offices, the rush of the new population. Ah, well, of course, we 're used to such scenes in the States. There 's a great trek going on now in our own South-West. But when that 's over, our free land is done. Canada will have the handling of the last batch of this planet.'

'If Canada by that time is not America,' said Mariette, dryly.

The American digested the remark.

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'Well,' he said at last, with a smile, 'if I were a Canadian, perhaps I should be a bit nervous.'

Whereupon Mariette with great animation developed his theme of the 'American invasion.' Winnipeg was one danger spot, British Columbia another. The 'peaceful penetration,' both of men and capital, was going on so rapidly that a movement for annexation, were it once started in certain districts of Canada, might be irresistible. The harsh and powerful face of the speaker became transfigured; one divined in him some hidden motive which was driving him to contest and belittle the main currents and sympathies about him. He spoke as a prophet, but the faith which envenomed the prophecy lay far out of sight.

Anderson took it quietly. The Chief Justice smiled.

'It might have been,' he said, 'it might have been! This railroad has made the difference.' He stretched out his hand towards the line and the pass. 'Twenty years ago, I came over this ground with the first party that ever pushed through Rogers Pass and down the Illecillewaet valley to the Pacific. We camped just about here for the night. And in the evening I was sitting by myself on the slopes of that mountain opposite' — he raised his hand — 'looking at the railway camps below me, and the first rough line that had been cut through the forests. And I thought of the day when the trains would be going backwards and forwards, and these nameless valleys and peaks would become the playground of Canada and America. But what I did n't see was the shade of England looking on! — *England*, whose greater destiny was being decided by those gangs of workmen below me, and the

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thousands of workmen behind me, busy night and day in bridging the gap between east and west. Traffic from north to south' — he turned towards the American — 'that meant, for *your* North-West, fusion with *our* North-West; traffic from east to west — that meant England, and the English Sisterhood of States! And that, for the moment, I did n't see.'

'Shall I quote you something I found in an Edmonton paper the other day?' said Anderson, raising his head from where he lay, looking down into the grass. And with his smiling, intent gaze fixed on the American, he recited: —

'Land of the sweeping eagle, your goal is not our goal!
For the ages have taught that the North and the South breed difference of soul.
We toiled for years in the snow and the night, because we believed in the spring,
And the mother who cheered us first, shall be first at the banquetting!
The grey old mother, the dear old mother, who taught us the note we sing!'

The American laughed.

'A bit rough, like some of your prairie towns; but it hits the nail. I dare say we have missed our bargain. What matter! Our own chunk is as big as we can chew.'

There was a moment's silence. Elizabeth's eyes were shining; even Philip sat open-mouthed and dumb, staring at Anderson.

In the background Delaine waited, grudgingly expectant, for the turn of Elizabeth's head, and the spark of consciousness passing between the two faces which he had learnt to watch. It came — a flash of some

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high sympathy — involuntary, lasting but a moment. Then Mariette threw out: —

'And in the end, what are you going to make of it? A replica of Europe, or America? — a money-grubbing civilisation with no faith but the dollar? If so, we shall have had the great chance of history — and lost it!'

'We shan't lose it,' said Anderson, 'unless the gods mock us.'

'Why not?' said Mariette sombrely. 'Nations have gone mad before now.'

'Ah! — prophesy, prophesy!' said the Chief Justice sadly. 'All very well for you young men, but for us, who are passing away! Here we are at the birth. Shall we never, in any state of being, know the end? I have never felt so bitterly as I do now the limitations of our knowledge and our life.'

No one answered him. But Elizabeth looking up saw the aspect of Mariette — the aspect of a thinker and a mystic — slowly relax. Its harshness became serenity, its bitterness peace. And with her quick feeling she guessed that the lament of the Chief Justice had only awakened in the religious mind, the typical religious cry, '*Thou*, Lord, art the Eternal, and Thy years shall not fail.'

. . . . . .

At Field, where a most friendly inn shelters under the great shoulders of Mount Stephen, they left the car awhile, took tea in the hotel, and wandered through the woods below it. All the afternoon, Elizabeth had shown a most delicate and friendly consideration for Delaine. She had turned the conversation often in his direction and on his subjects, had placed him by her

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side at tea, and in general had more than done her duty by him. To no purpose. Delaine saw himself as the condemned man to whom indulgences are granted before execution. She would probably have done none of these things if there had been any real chance for him.

But in the walk after tea, Anderson and Lady Merton drifted together. There had been so far a curious effort on both their parts to avoid each other's company. But now the Chief Justice and Delaine had foregathered; Philip was lounging and smoking on the balcony of the hotel with a visitor there, an old Etonian fishing and climbing in the Rockies for health, whom they had chanced upon at tea. Mariette, after one glance at the company, especially at Elizabeth and Anderson, had turned aside into the woods by himself.

They crossed the river and strolled up the road to Emerald Lake. Over the superb valley to their left hung the great snowy mass, glistening and sunlit, of Mount Stephen; far to the West the jagged peaks of the Van Horne range shot up into the golden air; on the flat beside the river vivid patches of some crimson flower, new to Elizabeth's eyes, caught the sloping light; and the voice of a swollen river pursued them.

They began to talk, this time of England. Anderson asked many questions as to English politics and personalities. And she, to please him, chattered of great people and events, of scenes and leaders in Parliament, of diplomats and royalties; all the gossip of the moment, in fact, fluttering round the principal figures of English and European politics. It was the

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talk most natural to her; the talk of the world she knew best; and as Elizabeth was full of shrewdness and natural salt, without a trace of malice, no more at least than a woman should have — to borrow the saying about Wilkes and his squint — her chatter was generally in request, and she knew it.

But Anderson, though he had led up to it, did not apparently enjoy it; on the contrary she felt him gradually withdrawing and cooling, becoming a little dry and caustic, even satirical, as on the first afternoon of their acquaintance. So that after a while her gossip flagged; since the game wants two to play it. Then Anderson walked on with a furrowed brow, and raised colour; and she could not imagine what had been done or said to annoy him.

She could only try to lead him back to Canada. But she got little or no response.

'Our politics must seem to you splashes in a water-butt,' he said impatiently, 'after London and Europe.'

'A pretty big water-butt!'

'Size makes no difference.' Elizabeth's lips twitched as she remembered Arthur Delaine's similar protests; but she kept her countenance, and merely worked the harder to pull her companion out of this odd pit of ill-humour into which he had fallen. And in the end she succeeded; he repented, and let her manage him as she would. And whether it was the influence of this hidden action and reaction between their minds, or of the perfumed June day breathing on them from the pines, or of that giant splendour of Mount Burgess, rising sheer in front of them out of the dark avenue of the forest, cannot be told; but, at least, they became more inti-

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mate than they had yet been, more deeply interesting each to the other. In his thoughts and ideals she found increasing fascination; her curiosity, her friendly and womanly curiosity, grew with satisfaction. His view of life was often harsh or melancholy; but there was never a false nor a mean note.

Yet before the walk was done he had startled her. As they turned back towards Field, and were in the shadows of the pines, he said, with abrupt decision: —

'Will you forgive me if I say something?'

She looked up surprised.

'Don't let your brother drink so much champagne!'

The colour rushed into Elizabeth's face. She drew herself up, conscious of sharp pain, but also of anger. A stranger, who had not yet known them ten days! But she met an expression on his face, timid and yet passionately resolved, which arrested her.

'I really don't know what you mean, Mr. Anderson!' she said proudly.

'I thought I had seen you anxious. I should be anxious if I were you,' he went on hurriedly. 'He has been ill, and is not quite master of himself. That is always the critical moment. He is a charming fellow — you must be devoted to him. For God's sake, don't let him ruin himself body and soul!'

Elizabeth was dumbfounded. The tears rushed into her eyes, her voice choked in her throat. She must, she would defend her brother. Then she thought of the dinner of the night before, and the night before that — of the wine bill at Winnipeg and Toronto. Her colour faded away; her heart sank; but it still seemed to her

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an outrage that he should have dared to speak of it. He spoke, however, before she could.

'Forgive me,' he said, recovering his self-control. 'I know it must seem mere insolence on my part. But I can't help it — I can't look on at such a thing, silently. May I explain? Please permit me! I told you' — his voice changed — 'my mother and sisters had been burnt to death. I adored my mother. She was everything to me. She brought us up with infinite courage, though she was a very frail woman. In those days a farm in Manitoba was a much harder struggle than it is now. Yet she never complained; she was always cheerful; always at work. But — my father drank! It came upon him as a young man — after an illness. It got worse as he grew older. Every bit of prosperity that came to us, he drank away; he would have ruined us again and again, but for my mother. And at last he murdered her — her and my poor sisters!'

Elizabeth made a sound of horror.

'Oh, there was no intention to murder,' said Anderson bitterly. 'He merely sat up drinking one winter night with a couple of whisky bottles beside him. Then in the morning he was wakened by the cold; the fire had gone out. He stumbled out to get the can of coal-oil from the stable, still dazed with drink, brought it in and poured some on the wood. Some more wood was wanted. He went out to fetch it, leaving his candle alight, a broken end in a rickety candle-stick, on the floor beside the coal-oil. When he got to the stable it was warm and comfortable; he forgot what he had come for, fell down on a bundle of straw, and went into a dead sleep. The candle must have fallen over into

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the oil, the oil exploded, and in a few seconds the wooden house was in flames. By the time I came rushing back from the slough where I had been breaking the ice for water, the roof had already fallen in. My poor mother and two of the children had evidently tried to escape by the stairway and had perished there; the two others were burnt in their beds,'

'And your father?' murmured Elizabeth, unable to take her eyes from the speaker.

'I woke him in the stable, and told him what had happened. Bit by bit I got out of him what he 'd done. And then I said to him, "Now choose! — either you go, or we. After the funeral, the boys and I have done with you. You can't force us to go on living with you. We will kill ourselves first. Either you stay here, and we go into Winnipeg, or you can sell the stock, take the money, and go. We 'll work the farm." He swore at me, but I told him he 'd find we 'd made up our minds. And a week later, he disappeared. He had sold the stock, and left us the burnt walls and the land.'

'And you 've never seen him since?'

'Never.'

'You believe him dead?'

'I know that he died — in the first Yukon rush of ten years ago. I tracked him there, shortly afterwards. He was probably killed in a scuffle with some miners as drunken as himself.'

There was a silence, which he broke very humbly.

'Do you forgive me? I know I am not sane on this point. I believe I have spoilt your day.'

She looked up, her eyes swimming in tears, and held out her hand.

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'It 's nothing, you know,' she said, trying to smile — 'in our case. Philip is such a baby.'

'I know; but look after him!' he said earnestly, as he grasped it.

The trees thinned, and voices approached. They emerged from the forest, and found themselves hailed by the Chief Justice.

. . . . . .

The journey up the pass was even more wonderful than the journey down. Sunset lights lay on the forests, on the glorious lonely mountains, and on the valley of the Yo Ho, roadless and houseless now, but soon to be as famous through the world as Grindelwald or Chamounix. They dismounted and explored the great camps of workmen in the pass; they watched the boiling of the stream, which had carved the path of the railway; they gathered white dogwood, and yellow snow-lilies, and red painter's brush.

Elizabeth and Anderson hardly spoke to each other. She talked a great deal with Delaine, and Mariette held a somewhat acid dispute with her on modern French books — Loti, Anatole France, Zola — authors whom his soul loathed.

But the day had forged a lasting bond between Anderson and Elizabeth, and they knew it.

. . . . . .

The night rose clear and cold, with stars shining on the snow. Delaine, who with Anderson had found quarters in one of Laggan's handful of houses, went out to stroll and smoke alone, before turning into bed. He walked along the railway line towards Banff, in bitter-

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ness of soul, debating with himself whether he could possibly leave the party at once.

When he was well out of sight of the station and the houses, he became aware of a man persistently following him, and not without a hasty grip on the stout stick he carried, he turned at last to confront him.

'What do you want with me? You seem to be following me.'

'Are you Mr. Arthur Delaine?' said a thick voice.

'That is my name. What do you want?'

'And you be lodging to-night in the same house with Mr. George Anderson?'

'I am. What 's that to you?'

'Well, I want twenty minutes' talk with you,' said the voice, after a pause. The accent was Scotch. In the darkness Delaine dimly perceived an old and bent man standing before him, who seemed to sway and totter as he leant upon his stick.

'I cannot imagine, sir, why you should want anything of the kind.' And he turned to pursue his walk. The old man kept up with him, and presently said something which brought Delaine to a sudden stop of astonishment. He stood there listening for a few minutes, transfixed, and finally, turning round, he allowed his strange companion to walk beside him back to Laggan.

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PART II

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'For still the Lord is Lord of might:
In deeds, in deeds, He takes delight;
The plough, the spear, the laden barks,
The field, the founded city, marks;
. . . . . .
Those He approves that ply the trade,
That rock the child, that wed the maid,
That with weak virtues, weaker hands,
Sow gladness on the peopled lands,
And still with laughter, song and shout,
Spin the great wheel of earth about.'

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CHAPTER VII

OH! the freshness of the morning on Lake Louise!

It was barely eight o'clock, yet Elizabeth Merton had already taken her coffee on the hotel verandah, and was out wandering by herself. The hotel, which is nearly six thousand feet above the sea, had only just been opened for its summer guests, and Elizabeth and her party were its first inmates. Anderson indeed had arranged their coming, and was to have brought them hither himself. But on the night of the party's return to Laggan he had been hastily summoned by telegraph to a consultation of engineers on a difficult matter of railway grading in the Kootenay district. Delaine, knocking at his door in the morning, had found him flown. A note for Lady Merton explained his flight, gave all directions for the drive to Lake Louise, and expressed his hope to be with them again as expeditiously as possible. Three days had now elapsed since he had left them. Delaine, rather to Elizabeth's astonishment, had once or twice inquired when he might be expected to return.

Elizabeth found a little path by the lake shore, and pursued it a short way; but presently the splendour and the beauty overpowered her; her feet paused of themselves. She sat down on a jutting promontory of rock, and lost herself in the forms and hues of the morning. In front of her rose a wall of glacier sheer out of the water and thousands of feet above the lake, into

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the clear brilliance of the sky. On either side of its dazzling whiteness, mountains of rose-coloured rock, fledged with pine, fell steeply to the water's edge, enclosing and holding up the glacier; and vast rock pinnacles of a paler rose, melting into gold, broke, here and there, the gleaming splendour of the ice. The sun, just topping the great basin, kindled the ice surfaces, and all the glistening pinks and yellows, the pale purples and blood-crimsons of the rocks, to flame and splendour; while shadows of coolest azure still held the hollows and caves of the glacier. Deep in the motionless lake, the shining snows repeated themselves, so also the rose-red rocks, the blue shadows, the dark buttressing crags with their pines. Height beyond height, glory beyond glory, — from the reality above, the eye descended to its lovelier image below, which lay there, enchanted and insubstantial, Nature's dream of itself.

The sky was pure light; the air pure fragrance. Heavy dews dripped from the pines and the moss, and sparkled in the sun. Beside Elizabeth, under a group of pines, lay a bed of snow-lilies, their golden heads dew-drenched, waiting for the touch of the morning, waiting, too — so she thought — for that Canadian poet who will yet place them in English verse beside the daffodils of Westmoreland.

She could hardly breathe for delight. The Alps, whether in their Swiss or Italian aspects, were dear and familiar to her. She climbed nimbly and well; and her senses knew the magic of high places. But never surely had even travelled eyes beheld a nobler fantasy of Nature than that composed by these snows and forests of Lake Louise; such rocks of opal and pearl; such dark

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Lake Louise and Mount Victoria in British Columbia

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gradations of splendour in calm waters; such balanced intricacy and harmony in the building of this ice-palace that reared its majesty above the lake; such beauty of subordinate and converging outline in the supporting mountains on either hand; as though the Earth-Spirit had lingered on his work, finishing and caressing it in conscious joy.

And in Elizabeth's heart too there was a freshness of spring; an overflow of something elemental and irresistible.

Yet, strangely enough, it was at that moment expressing itself in regret and compunction. Since the dawn, that morning, she had been unable to sleep. The strong light, the pricking air, had kept her wakeful; and she had been employing her time in writing to her mother, who was also her friend.

. . . 'Dear little mother, — You will say I have been unkind — I say it to myself. But would it really have been fairer if I had forbidden him to join us? There was just a chance — it seems ridiculous now — but there was — I confess it! And by my letter from Toronto — though really my little note might have been written to anybody — I as good as said to him, "Come and throw the dice — and let us see what falls out!" Practically, that is what it amounted to — I admit it in sackcloth and ashes. Well! — we have thrown the dice — and it won't do! No, it won't, it won't do! And it is somehow all my fault — which is abominable. But I see now, what I never saw at home or in Italy, that he is a thousand years older than I — that I should weary and jar upon him at every turn, were I to marry him. Also I have discovered — out

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here — I believe, darling, you have known it all along! — that there is at the very root of me a kind of savage — a creature that hates fish-knives and finger-glasses and dressing for dinner — the things I have done all my life, and Arthur Delaine will go on doing all this. Also that I never want to see a museum again — at least, not for a long time; and that I don't care twopence whether Herculaneum is excavated or not!

'Is n't it shocking? I can't explain myself; and poor Mr. Arthur evidently can't make head or tail of me, and thinks me a little mad. So I am in a sense. I am suffering from a new kind of *folie des grandeurs*. The world has suddenly grown so big; everything in the human story — all its simple fundamental things at least —is writ so large here. Hope and ambition — love and courage — the man wrestling with the earth — the woman who bears and brings up children — it is as though I had never felt, never seen them before. They rise out of the dust and mist of our modern life — great shapes warm from the breast of Nature — and I hold my breath. Behind them, for landscape, all the dumb age-long past of these plains and mountains; and in front, the future of the loom, and the young radiant nation, shuttle in hand, moving to and fro at her unfolding task! —

'How unfair to Mr. Arthur that this queer intoxication of mine should have altered him so in my foolish eyes! — as though one had scrubbed all the golden varnish from an old picture, and left it crude and charmless. It is not his fault — it is mine. In Europe we loved the same things; his pleasure kindled mine. But here he enjoys nothing that I enjoy; he is longing for a

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tiresome day to end, when my heart is just singing for delight. For it is not only Canada in the large that holds me, but all its dear, human, dusty, incoherent detail — all its clatter of new towns and spreading farms — of pushing railways and young parliaments — of road-making and bridge-making — of saw-mills and lumber camps — detail so different from anything I have ever discussed with Arthur Delaine before. Some of it is ugly, I know — I don't care! It is like a Rembrandt ugliness — that only helps and ministers to a stronger beauty, the beauty of prairie and sky, and the beauty of the human battle, the battle of blood and brain, with the earth and her forces.

'*Enter these enchanted woods, you who dare!*'

'There is a man here — a Mr. George Anderson, of whom I told you something in my last letter — who seems to embody the very life of this country, to be the prairie, and the railway, and the forest — their very spirit and avatar. Personally, he is often sad; his own life has been hard; and yet the heart of him is all hope and courage, all delight too in the daily planning and wrestling, the contrivance and the cleverness, the rifling and outwitting of Nature — that makes a Canadian — at any rate, a Western Canadian. I suppose he does n't know anything about art. Mr. Arthur seems to have nothing in common with him; but there is in him that rush and energy of life, from which, surely, art and poetry spring? — when the time is ripe.

'Don't of course imagine anything absurd! He is just a young Scotch engineer, who seems to have made some money as people do make money here — quickly and honestly — and is shortly going into Parliament.

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They say that he is sure to be a great man. To us — to Philip and me, he has been extremely kind. I only meant that he seems to be in place here — or anywhere, indeed, where the world is moving; while Mr. Arthur, in Canada, is a walking anachronism. He is out of perspective; he does n't fit.

'You will say, of course, that if I married him, it would not be to live in Canada, and once at home again the old estimates and "values" would reassert themselves. But in a sense — don't be alarmed! — I shall always live in Canada. Or, rather, I shall never be quite the same again; and Mr. Arthur would find me a restless, impracticable, discontented woman.

'Would it not really be kinder if I suggested to him to go home by California, while we come back again through the Rockies? Don't you think it would? I feel that I have begun to get on his nerves — as he on mine. If you were only here! But, I assure you, he does n't *look* miserable; and I think he will bear up very well. And if it will be any comfort to you to be told that I know what is meant by the gnawing of the little worm, Compunction, then be comforted, dearest; for it gnaws horribly, and out of all proportion — I vow — to my crimes.

'Philip is better on the whole, and has taken an enormous fancy to Mr. Anderson. But, as I have told you all along, he is not so much better as you and I hoped he would be. I take every care of him that I can, but you know that he is not wax, when it comes to managing. However, Mr. Anderson has been a great help.'

Recollections of this letter, and other thoughts be-

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sides, coming from much deeper strata of the mind than she had been willing to reveal to her mother, kept slipping at intervals through Elizabeth's consciousness, as she sat beside the lake.

A step beside her startled her, and she looked up to see Delaine approaching.

'Out already, Mr. Arthur! But *I* have had breakfast!'

'So have I. What a place!'

Elizabeth did not answer, but her smiling eye swept the glorious circle of the lake.

'How soon will it all be spoilt and vulgarised?' said Delaine, with a shrug. 'Next year, I suppose, a funicular, to the top of the glacier.'

Elizabeth cried out.

'Why not?' he asked her, as he rather coolly and deliberately took his seat beside her. 'You applaud telephones on the prairies; why not funiculars here?'

'The one serves, the other spoils,' said Elizabeth eagerly.

'Serves whom? Spoils what?' The voice was cold. 'All travellers are not like yourself.'

'I am not afraid. The Canadians will guard their heritage.'

'How dull England will seem to you when you go back to it!' he said to her, after a moment. His tone had an under note of bitterness which Elizabeth uncomfortably recognised.

'Oh! I have a way of liking what I must like,' she said, hurriedly. 'Just now, certainly, I am in love with deserts — flat or mountainous — tempered by a private car.'

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He laughed perfunctorily. And suddenly it seemed to her that he had come out to seek her with a purpose, and that a critical moment might be approaching. Her cheeks flushed, and to hide them she leant over the water's edge and began to trail her finger in its clear wave.

He, however, sat in hesitation, looking at her, the prey of thoughts to which she had no clue. He could not make up his mind, though he had just spent an almost sleepless night in the attempt to do it.

The silence became embarrassing. Then, if he still groped, she seemed to see her way, and took it.

'It was very good of you to come out and join our wanderings,' she said suddenly. Her voice was clear and kind. He started.

'You know I could ask for nothing better,' was his slow reply, not without dignity. 'It has been an immense privilege to see you like this, day by day.'

Elizabeth's pulse quickened.

'How can I manage it?' she desperately thought. 'But I must —'

'That 's very sweet of you,' she said aloud, 'when I have bored you so with my raptures. And now it 's coming to an end, like all nice things. Philip and I think of staying a little in Vancouver. And the Governor has asked us to go over to Victoria for a few days. You, I suppose, will be doing the proper round, and going back by Seattle and San Francisco?'

Delaine received the blow — and understood it. There had been no definite plans ahead. Tacitly, it had been assumed, he thought, that he was to return with them to Montreal and England. This gentle ques-

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tion, then, was Elizabeth's way of telling him that his hopes were vain and his journey fruitless.

He had not often been crossed in his life, and a flood of resentment surged up in a very perplexed mind.

'Thank you. Yes — I shall go home by San Francisco.'

The touch of haughtiness in his manner, the manner of one accustomed all his life to be a prominent and considered person in the world, did not disguise from Elizabeth the soreness underneath. It was hard to hurt her old friend. But she could only sit as though she felt nothing — meant nothing — of any importance.

And she achieved it to perfection. Delaine, through all his tumult of feeling, was sharply conscious of her grace, her reticence, her soft dignity. They were exactly what he coveted in a wife — what he hoped he had captured in Elizabeth. How was it they had been snatched from him? He turned blindly on the obstacle that had risen in his path, and the secret he had not yet decided how to handle begun to run away with him.

He bent forward, with a slightly heightened colour.

'Lady Merton! — we might not have another opportunity — will you allow me a few frank words with you — the privilege of an old friend?'

Elizabeth turned her face to him, and a pair of startled eyes that tried not to waver.

'Of course, Mr. Arthur,' she said, smiling. 'Have I been doing anything dreadful?'

'May I ask what you personally know of this Mr. Anderson?'

He saw — or thought he saw — her brace herself

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under the sudden surprise of the name, and her momentary discomfiture pleased him.

'What I know of Mr. Anderson?' she repeated wondering. 'Why, no more than we all know. What do you mean, Mr. Arthur? Ah, yes, I remember, you first met him at Winnipeg; *we* made acquaintance with him the day before.'

'For the first time? But you are now seeing a great deal of him. Are you quite sure — forgive me if I seem impertinent — that he is — quite the person to be admitted to your daily companionship?'

He spoke slowly and harshly. The effort required before a naturally amiable and nervous man could bring himself to put such an uncomfortable question made it appear particularly offensive.

'Our daily companionship?' repeated Elizabeth in bewilderment. 'What *can* you mean, Mr. Arthur? What is wrong with Mr. Anderson? You saw that everybody at Winnipeg seemed to know him and respect him; people like the Chief Justice, and the Senator — what was his name? — and Monsieur Mariette. I don't understand why you ask me such a thing. Why should we suppose there are any mysteries about Mr. Anderson?'

Unconsciously her slight figure had stiffened, her voice had changed.

Delaine felt an admonitory qualm. He would have drawn back; but it was too late. He went on doggedly —

'Were not all these persons you name acquainted with Mr. Anderson in his public capacity? His success in the strike of last year brought him a great notoriety. But his private history — his family and an-

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tecedents — have you gathered anything at all about them?'

Something that he could not decipher flashed through Elizabeth's expression. It was a strange and thrilling sense that what she had gathered she would not reveal — for a kingdom!

'Monsieur Mariette told me all that any one need want to know!' she cried, breathing quick. 'Ask him what he thinks — what he feels! But if you ask *me*, I think Mr. Anderson carries his history in his face.'

Delaine pondered a moment, while Elizabeth waited, challenging, expectant, her brown eyes all vivacity.

'Well — some facts have come to my knowledge,' he said, at last, 'which have made me ask you these questions. My only object — you must, you will admit that! — is to save you possible pain — a possible shock.'

'Mr. Arthur!' — the voice was peremptory — 'If you have learnt anything about Mr. Anderson's private history — by chance — without his knowledge — that perhaps he would rather we did not know — I beg you will not tell me — indeed — please! — I forbid you to tell me. We owe him much kindness these last few weeks. I cannot gossip about him behind his back.'

All her fine slenderness of form, her small delicacy of feature, seemed to him tense and vibrating, like some precise and perfect instrument strained to express a human feeling or intention. But what feeling? While he divined it, was she herself unconscious of it? His bitterness grew.

'Dear Lady Merton! — can you not trust an old friend?'

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She did not soften.

'I do trust him. But —' her smile flashed — 'even new acquaintances have their rights.'

'You will not understand,' he said, earnestly. 'What is in my mind came to me, through no wish or will of mine. You cannot suppose that I have been prying into Mr. Anderson's affairs! But now that the information is mine, I feel a great responsibility towards you.'

'Don't feel it. I am a wilful woman.'

'A rather perplexing one! May I at least be sure that' — he hesitated — 'that you will be on your guard?'

'On my guard?' — she lifted her eyebrows proudly — 'and against what?'

'That is precisely what you won't let me tell you.'

She laughed, — a little fiercely.

'There we are; no forrarder. But please remember, Mr. Arthur, how soon we shall all be separating. Nothing very dreadful can happen in these few days — can it?'

For the first time was there a touch of malice in her smile?

Delaine rose, took one or two turns along the path in front of her, and then suddenly stopped beside her.

'I think,' he said, with emphasis, 'that Mr. Anderson will probably find himself summoned away — immediately — before you get to Vancouver. But that I will discuss with him. You could give me no address, so I have not been able to communicate with him.'

Again Elizabeth's eyebrows went up. She rose.

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'Of course you will do what you think best. Shall we go back to the hotel?'

They walked along in silence. He saw that she was excited, and that he had completely missed his stroke; but he did not see how to mend the situation.

'Oh! there is Philip, going to fish,' said Elizabeth at last, as though nothing had happened. 'I wondered what could possibly have got him up so early.'

Philip waved to her as she spoke, shouting something which the mountain echoes absorbed. He was accompanied by a young man, who seemed to be attached to the hotel as guide, fisherman, hunter, — at the pleasure of visitors. But Elizabeth had already discovered that he had the speech of a gentleman, and attended the University of Manitoba during the winter. In the absence of Anderson, Philip had no doubt annexed him for the morning.

There was a pile of logs lying on the lake side. Philip, rod in hand, began to scramble over them to a point where several large trunks overhung deep water. His companion meanwhile was seated on the moss, busy with some preparations.

'I hope Philip will be careful,' said Delaine, suddenly. 'There is nothing so slippery as logs.'

Elizabeth, who had been dreaming, looked up anxiously. As she did so Philip, high perched on the furthest logs, turned again to shout to his sister, his light figure clear against the sunlit distance. Then the figure wavered, there was a sound of crashing wood, and, Philip fell headforemost into the lake before him.

The young man on the bank looked up, threw away his rod and his coat, and was just plunging into the lake

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when he was anticipated by another man who had come running down the bank of the hotel, and was already in the water. Elizabeth, as she rushed along the edge, recognised Anderson. Philip seemed to have disappeared; but Anderson dived, and presently emerged with a limp burden. The guide was now aiding him, and between them they brought young Gaddesden to land. The whole thing passed so rapidly that Delaine and Elizabeth, running at full speed, had hardly reached the spot before Anderson was on the shore, bearing the lad in his arms.

Elizabeth bent over him with a moan of anguish. He seemed to her dead.

'He has only fainted,' said Anderson peremptorily. 'We must get him in.' And he hurried on, refusing Delaine's help, carrying the thin body apparently with ease along the path and up the steps to the hotel. The guide had already been sent flying ahead to warn the household.

Thus, by one of the commonplace accidents of travel, the whole scene was changed for this group of travellers. Philip Gaddesden would have taken small harm from his tumble into the lake, but for the fact that the effects of rheumatic fever were still upon him. As it was, a certain amount of fever, and some heart-symptoms that it was thought had been overcome, reappeared, and within a few hours of the accident it became plain that, although he was in no danger, they would be detained at least ten days, perhaps a fortnight, at Lake Louise. Elizabeth sat down in deep despondency to write to her mother, and then lingered

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awhile with the letter before her, her head in her hands, pondering with emotion what she and Philip owed to George Anderson, who had, it seemed, arrived by a night train, and walked up to the hotel, in the very nick of time. As to the accident itself, no doubt the guide, a fine swimmer and *coureur de bois*, would have been sufficient, unaided, to save her brother. But after all it was Anderson's strong arms that had drawn him from the icy depths of the lake, and carried him to safety. And since? Never had telephone and railway, and general knowledge of the resources at command, been worked more skilfully than by him, and the kind people of the hotel. 'Don't be the least anxious' — she had written to her mother — 'we have a capital doctor — all the chemist's stuff we want — and we could have a nurse at any moment. Mr. Anderson has only to order one up from the camp hospital in the pass. But for the present, Simpson and I are enough for the nursing.'

She heard voices in the next room; a faint question from Philip, Anderson replying. What an influence this man of strong character had already obtained over her wilful, self-indulgent brother! She saw the signs of it in many directions; and she was passionately grateful for it. Her thoughts went wandering back over the past three weeks — over the whole gradual unveiling of Anderson's personality. She recalled her first impressions of him the day of the 'sink-hole.' An ordinary, strong, capable, ambitious young man, full of practical interests, with brusque manners, and a visible lack of some of the outer wrappings to which she was accustomed; — it was so that she had first envis-

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aged him. Then at Winnipeg — through Mariette and others — she had seen him as other men saw him, his seniors and contemporaries, the men engaged with him in the making of this vast country. She had appreciated his character in what might be hereafter, apparently, its public aspects; the character of one for whom the world surrounding him was eagerly prophesying a future and a career. His profound loyalty to Canada, and to certain unspoken ideals behind, which were really the source of the loyalty; the atmosphere at once democratic and imperial in which his thoughts and desires moved, which had more than once communicated its passion to her; a touch of poetry, of melancholy, of greatness even — all this she had gradually perceived. Winnipeg and the prairie journey had developed him thus before her.

So much for the second stage in her knowledge of him. There was a third; she was in the midst of it. Her face flooded with colour against her will. 'Out of the strong shall come forth sweetness.' The words rushed into her mind. She hoped, as one who wished him well, that he would marry soon and happily. And the woman who married him would find it no tame future.

Suddenly Delaine's warnings occurred to her. She laughed, a little hysterically.

Could any one have shown himself more helpless, useless, incompetent, than Arthur Delaine since the accident? Yet he was still on the spot. She realised, indeed, that it was hardly possible for their old friend to desert them under the circumstances. But he merely represented an additional burden.

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A knock at her sitting-room door disturbed her. Anderson appeared.

'I am off to Banff, Lady Merton,' he said, from the threshold. 'I think I have all your commissions. Is your letter ready?'

She sealed it and gave it him. Then she looked up at him; and for the first time he saw her tremulous and shaken; not for her brother, but for herself.

'I don't know how to thank you.' She offered her hand; and one of those beautiful looks — generous, friendly, sincere — of which she had the secret.

He, too, flushed, his eyes held a moment by hers. Then he, somewhat brusquely, disengaged himself.

'Why, I did nothing! He was in no danger; the guide would have had him out in a twinkle. I wish —' he frowned — 'you would n't look so done up over it.'

'Oh! I am all right.'

'I brought you a book this morning. Mercifully I left it in the drawing-room, so it has n't been in the lake.'

He drew it from his pocket. It was a French novel she had expressed a wish to read.

She exclaimed,

'How did you get it?'

'I found Mariette had it with him. He sends it me from Vancouver. Will you promise to read it — and rest?'

He drew a sofa towards the window. The June sunset was blazing on the glacier without.

Would he next offer to put a shawl over her, and tuck her up? She retreated hastily to the writing-table, one hand upon it. He saw the lines of her grey dress,

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her small neck and head, the Quakerish smoothness of her brown hair, against the light. The little figure was grace, refinement, embodied. But it was a grace that implied an environment — the cosmopolitan, luxurious environment, in which such women naturally move.

His look clouded. He said a hasty good-bye and departed. Elizabeth was left breathing quick, one hand on her breast. It was as though she had escaped something — or missed something.

As he left the hotel, Anderson found himself intercepted by Delaine in the garden, and paused at once to give him the latest news.

'The report is really good, everything considered,' he said, with a cordiality born of their common anxiety; and he repeated the doctor's last words to himself.

'Excellent!' said Delaine; then, clearing his throat, 'Mr. Anderson, may I have some conversation with you?'

Anderson looked surprised, threw him a keen glance, and invited him to accompany him part of the way to Laggan. They turned into a solitary road, running between woods. It was late evening, and the sun was striking through the Laggan valley beneath them in low shafts of gold and purple.

'I am afraid what I have to say will be disagreeable to you,' began Delaine, abruptly. 'And on this particular day — when we owe you so much — it is more than disagreeable to myself. But I have no choice. By some extraordinary chance, with which I beg you to believe my own will has had nothing to do, I have be-

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come acquainted with something — something that concerns you privately — something that I fear will be a great shock to you.'

Anderson stood still.

'What can you possibly mean?' he said, in growing amazement.

'I was accosted the night before last, as I was strolling along the railway line, by a man I had never seen before, a man who — pardon me, it is most painful to me to seem to be interfering with any one's private affairs — who announced himself as —' the speaker's nervous stammer intervened before he jerked out the words — 'as your father!'

'As my father? Somebody must be mad!' said Anderson quietly. 'My father has been dead ten years.'

'I am afraid there is a mistake. The man who spoke to me is aware that you suppose him dead — he had his own reasons, he declares, for allowing you to remain under a misconception; he now wishes to reopen communications with you, and to my great regret, to my indignation, I may say, he chose me — an entire stranger — as his intermediary. He seems to have watched our party all the way from Winnipeg, where he first saw you, casually, in the street. Naturally I tried to escape from him — to refer him to you. But I could not possibly escape from him, at night, with no road for either of us but the railway line. I was at his mercy.'

'What was his reason for not coming direct to me?'

They were still pausing in the road. Delaine could see in the failing light that Anderson had grown pale.

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But he perceived also an expression of scornful impatience in the blue eyes fixed upon him.

'He professed to be afraid —'

'That I should murder him?' said Anderson with a laugh. 'And he told you some sort of a story?'

'A long one, I regret to say.'

'And not to my credit?'

'The tone of it was certainly hostile. I would rather not repeat it.'

'I should not dream of asking you to do so. And where is this precious individual to be found?'

Delaine named the address which had been given him — of a lodging mainly for railway men near Laggan.

'I will look him up,' said Anderson briefly. 'The whole story of course is a mere attempt to get money — for what reason I do not know; but I will look into it.'

Delaine was silent. Anderson divined from his manner that he believed the story true. In the minds of both the thought of Lady Merton emerged. Anderson scorned to ask, 'Have you said anything to them?' and Delaine was conscious of a nervous fear lest he should ask it. In the light of the countenance beside him, no less than of the event of the day, his behaviour of the morning began to seem to him more than disputable. In the morning he had seemed to himself the defender of Elizabeth and the class to which they both belonged against low-born adventurers with disreputable pasts. But as he stood there, confronting the 'adventurer,' his conscience as a gentleman — which was his main and typical conscience — pricked him.

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The inward qualm, however, only stiffened his manner. And Anderson asked nothing. He turned towards Laggan.

'Good-night. I will let you know the result of my investigations.' And, with the shortest of nods, he went off at a swinging pace down the road.

'I have only done my duty,' argued Delaine with himself as he returned to the hotel. 'It was uncommonly difficult to do it at such a moment! But to him I have no obligations whatever; my obligations are to Lady Merton and her family.'

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CHAPTER VIII

It was dark when Anderson reached Laggan, if that can be called darkness which was rather a starry twilight, interfused with the whiteness of snowfield and glacier. He first of all despatched a message to Banff for Elizabeth's commissions. Then he made straight for the ugly frame house of which Delaine had given him the address. It was kept by a couple well known to him, an Irishman and his wife who made their living partly by odd jobs on the railway, partly by lodging men in search of work in the various construction camps of the line. To all such persons Anderson was a familiar figure, especially since the great strike of the year before.

The house stood by itself in a plot of cleared ground, some two or three hundred yards from the railway station. A rough road through the pine wood led up to it.

Anderson knocked, and Mrs. Ginnell came to the door, a tired, and apparently sulky woman.

'I hear you have a lodger here, Mrs. Ginnell,' said Anderson, standing in the doorway, 'a man called McEwen; and that he wants to see me on some business or other.'

Mrs. Ginnell's countenance darkened.

'We have an old man here, Mr. Anderson, as answers to that name, but you 'll get no business out of him — and I don't believe he *have* any business with any decent crater. When he arrive two days ago he

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was the worse for liquor, took on at Calgary. I made my husband look after him that night to see he did n't get at nothing, but yesterday he slipped us both, an' I believe he 's now in that there outhouse, a-sleeping it off. Old men like him should be sent somewhere safe, an' kep' there.'

'I 'll go and see if he 's awake, Mrs. Ginnell. Don't you trouble to come. Any other lodgers?'

'No, sir. There was a bunch of 'em left this morning — got work on the Crow's Nest.'

Anderson made his way to the little 'shack,' Ginnell's house of the first year, now used as a kind of general receptacle for tools, rubbish and stores.

He looked in. On a heap of straw in the corner lay a huddled figure, a kind of human rag. Anderson paused a moment, then entered, hung the lamp he had brought with him on a peg, and closed the door behind him.

He stood looking down at the sleeper, who was in the restless stage before waking. McEwen threw himself from side to side, muttered, and stretched.

Slowly a deep colour flooded Anderson's cheeks and brow; his hands hanging beside him clenched; he checked a groan that was also a shudder. The abjectness of the figure, the terrible identification proceeding in his mind, the memories it evoked, were rending and blinding him. The winter morning on the snow-strewn prairie, the smell of smoke blown towards him on the wind, the flames of the burning house, the horror of the search among the ruins, his father's confession, and his own rage and despair: — deep in the tissues of life these images were stamped. The anguish of them ran once more through his being.

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How had he been deceived? And what was to be done? He sat down on a heap of rubbish beside the straw, looking at his father. He had last seen him as a man of fifty, vigorous, red-haired, coarsely handsome, though already undermined by drink. The man lying on the straw was approaching seventy, and might have been much older. His matted hair was nearly white, his face blotched and cavernous; and the relaxation of sleep emphasised the mean cunning of the mouth. His clothing was torn and filthy, the hands repulsive.

Anderson could only bear a few minutes of this spectacle. A natural shame intervened. He bent over his father and called him.

'Robert Anderson!'

A sudden shock passed through the sleeper. He started up, and Anderson saw his hand dart for something lying beside him, no doubt a revolver.

But Anderson grasped the arm.

'Don't be afraid; you 're quite safe.'

McEwen, still bewildered by sleep and drink, tried to shake off the grasp, to see who it was standing over him. Anderson released him, and moved so that the lamplight fell upon himself.

Slowly McEwen's faculties came together, began to work. The lamplight showed him his son George — the fair-haired, broad-shouldered fellow he had been tracking all these days — and he understood.

He straightened himself, with an attempt at dignity.

'So it 's you, George? You might have given me notice.'

'Where have you been all these years?' said Ander-

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son, indistinctly. 'And why did you let me believe you dead?'

'Well, I had my reasons, George. But I don't mean to go into 'em. All that 's dead and gone. There was a pack of fellows then on my shoulders — I was plumb tired of 'em. I had to get rid of — I did get rid of 'em — and you, too. I knew you were inquiring after me, and I did n't want inquiries. They did n't suit me. You may conclude what you like. I tell you those times are dead and gone. But it seemed to me that Robert Anderson was best put away for a bit. So I took measures accordingly.'

'You knew I was deceived.'

'Yes, I knew,' said the other composedly. 'Could n't be helped.'

'And where have you been since?'

'In Nevada, George, — Comstock — silver-mining. Rough lot, but you get a stroke of luck sometimes. I've got a chance on now — me and a friend of mine — that 's first rate.'

'What brought you back to Canada?'

'Well, it was your aunt, Mrs. Harriet Sykes. Ever hear of her, George?'

Anderson shook his head.

'You must have heard of her when you were a little chap. When I left Ayrshire in 1840 she was a lass of sixteen; never saw her since. But she married a man well-to-do, and was left a widder with no children. And when she died t'other day, she 'd left me something in her will, and told the lawyers to advertise over here, in Canada and the States — both. And I happened on the advertisement in a Chicago paper. Told

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yer to call on Smith & Dawkins, Winnipeg. So that was how I came to see Winnipeg again.'

'When were you there?'

'Just when you was,' said the old man, with a triumphant look, which for the moment effaced the squalor of his aspect. 'I was coming out of Smith & Dawkins' with the money in my pocket, when I saw you opposite, just going into a shop. You could ha' knocked me down easy, I warrant ye. Did n't expect to come on yer tracks as fast as all that. But there you were, and when you came out and went down t' street, I just followed you at a safe distance, and saw you go into the hotel. Afterwards, I went into the Free Library to think a bit, and then I saw the piece in the paper about you and that Saskatchewan place; and I got hold of a young man in a saloon who found out all about you and those English swells you 've been hanging round with; and that same night, when you boarded the train, I boarded it, too. See? Only I am not a swell like you. And here we are. See?'

This last speech was delivered with a mixture of bravado, cunning, and sinister triumph. Anderson sat with his head in his hands, his eyes on the mud floor, listening. When it was over he looked up.

'Why did n't you come and speak to me at once?'

The other hesitated.

'Well, I was n't a beauty to look at. Not much of a credit to you, am I? Did n't think you 'd own me. And I don't like towns — too many people about. Thought I 'd catch you somewhere on the quiet. Heard you was going to the Rockies. Thought I might as well go round by Seattle home. See?'

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'You have had plenty of chances since Winnipeg of making yourself known to me,' said Anderson sombrely. 'Why did you speak to a stranger instead of coming direct to me?'

McEwen hesitated a moment.

'Well, I was n't sure of you. I did n't know how you 'd take it. And I 'd lost my nerve, d—n it! the last few years. Thought you might just kick me out, or set the police on me.'

Anderson studied the speaker. His fair skin was deeply flushed; his brow frowned unconsciously, reflecting the travail of thought behind it.

'What did you say to that gentleman the other night?'

McEwen smiled a shifty smile, and began to pluck some pieces of straw from his sleeve.

'Don't remember just what I did say. Nothing to do you no harm, anyway. I might have said you were never an easy chap to get on with. I might perhaps have said that, or I might n't. Think I did. Don't remember.'

The eyes of the two men met for a moment, Anderson's bright and fixed. He divined perfectly what had been said to the Englishman, Lady Merton's friend and travelling companion. A father overborne by misfortunes and poverty, disowned by a prosperous and Pharisaical son, — admitting a few peccadilloes, such as most men forgive, in order to weigh them against virtues, such as all men hate. Old age and infirmity on the one hand; mean hardness and cruelty on the other. Was Elizabeth already contemplating the picture?

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And yet — No! unless perhaps under the shelter of darkness, it could never have been possible for this figure before him to play the part of innocent misfortune, at all events. Could debauch, could ruin of body and soul be put more plainly? Could they express themselves more clearly than through this face and form?

A shudder ran through Anderson, a cry against fate, a sick wondering as to his own past responsibility, a horror of the future. Then his will strengthened, and he set himself quietly to see what could be done.

'We can't talk here,' he said to his father. 'Come back into the house. There are some rooms vacant. I 'll take them for you.'

McEwen rose with difficulty, groaning as he put his right foot to the ground. Anderson then perceived that the right foot and ankle were wrapped round with a bloodstained rag, and was told that the night before their owner had stumbled over a jug in Mrs. Ginnell's kitchen, breaking the jug and inflicting some deep cuts on his own foot and ankle. McEwen, indeed, could only limp along, with mingled curses and lamentations, supported by Anderson. In the excitement of his son's appearance, he had forgotten his injury. The pain and annoyance of it returned upon him now with added sharpness, and Anderson realised that here was yet another complication as they moved across the yard.

A few words to the astonished Mrs. Ginnell sufficed to secure all her vacant rooms, four in number. Anderson put his father in one on the ground floor, then shut the door on him and went back to the woman of the house. She stood looking at him, flushed, in a bewild-

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ered silence. But she and her husband owed various kindnesses to Anderson, and he quickly made up his mind.

In a very few words he quietly told her the real facts, confiding them both to her self-interest and her humanity. McEwen was to be her only lodger till the next step could be determined. She was to wait on him, to keep drink from him, to get him clothes. Her husband was to go out with him, if he should insist on going out; but Anderson thought his injury would keep him quiet for a day or two. Meanwhile, no babbling to anybody. And, of course, generous payment for all that was asked of them.

But Mrs. Ginnell understood that she was being appealed to not only commercially, but as a woman with a heart in her body and a good share of Irish wit. That moved and secured her. She threw herself nobly into the business. Anderson might command her as he pleased, and she answered for her man. Renewed groans from the room next door disturbed them. Mrs. Ginnell went in to answer them, and came out demanding a doctor. The patient was in much pain, the wounds looked bad, and she suspected fever. 'Yo can't especk places to heal with such as him,' she said, grimly.

With doggedness, Anderson resigned himself. He went to the station and sent a wire to Field for a doctor. What would happen when he arrived he did not know. He had made no compact with his father. If the old man chose to announce himself, so be it. Anderson did not mean to bargain or sue. Other men have had to bear such burdens in the face of the world. Should it fall to him to be forced to take his up in like manner,

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let him set his teeth and shoulder it, sore and shaken as he was. He felt a fierce confidence that he could still make the world respect him.

An hour passed away. An answer came from Field to the effect that a doctor would be sent up on a freight train just starting, and might be expected shortly.

While Mrs. Ginnell was still attending on her lodger, Anderson went out into the starlight to try and think out the situation. The night was clear and balmy. The high snows glimmered through the lingering twilight, and in the air there was at last a promise of 'midsummer pomps.' Pine woods and streams breathed freshness, and when in his walk along the railway line — since there is no other road through the Kicking Horse Pass — he reached a point whence the great Yo Ho valley became visible to the right, he checked the rapid movement which had brought him a kind of physical comfort, and set himself — in face of that far-stretching and splendid solitude — to wrestle with calamity.

First of all there was the Englishman — Delaine — and the letter that must be written him. But there also no evasions, no suppliancy. Delaine must be told that the story was true, and would no doubt think himself entitled to act upon it. The protest on behalf of Lady Merton implied already in his manner that afternoon was humiliating enough. The smart of it was still tingling through Anderson's being. He had till now felt a kind of instinctive contempt for Delaine as a fine gentleman with a useless education, inclined to patronise 'colonists.' The two men had jarred from the beginning, and at Banff, Anderson had both divined in him the possible suitor of Lady Merton, and had also be-

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come aware that Delaine resented his own intrusion upon the party, and the rapid intimacy which had grown up between him and the brother and sister. Well, let him use his chance! if it so pleased him. No promise whatever should be asked of him; there should be no suggestion even of a line of action. The bare fact which he had become possessed of should be admitted, and he should be left to deal with it. Upon his next step would depend Anderson's; that was all.

But Lady Merton?

Anderson stared across the near valley, up the darkness beyond, where lay the forests of the Yo Ho, and so to those ethereal summits whence a man might behold on one side the smoke-wreaths of the great railway, and on the other side the still virgin peaks of the northern Rockies, untamed, untrodden. But his senses were holden; he saw neither snow nor forests, and the roar of the stream dashing at his feet was unheard.

Three weeks, was it, since he had first seen that delicately oval face, and those clear eyes? The strong man — accustomed to hold himself in check, to guard his own strength as the instrument, firm and indispensable, of an iron will — recoiled from the truth he was at last compelled to recognise. In this daily companionship with a sensitive and charming woman, endowed beneath her light reserve with all the sweetnesses of unspoilt feeling, while yet commanding through her long training in an old society a thousand delicacies and subtleties, which played on Anderson's fresh senses like the breeze on young leaves — whither had he been drifting? — to the brink of what precipice had he brought himself, unknowing?

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He stood there indefinitely, among the charred tree-trunks that bordered the line, his arms folded, looking straight before him, motionless.

Supposing to-day had been yesterday, need he — together with this sting of passion — have felt also this impotent and angry despair? Before his eyes had seen that figure lying on the straw of Mrs. Ginnell's out-house, could he ever have dreamed it possible that Elizabeth Merton should marry him?

Yes! He thought, trembling from head to foot, of that expression in her eyes he had seen that very afternoon. Again and again he had checked his feeling by the harsh reminder of her social advantages. But, at this moment of crisis, the man in him stood up, confident and rebellious. He knew himself sound, intellectually and morally. There was a career before him, to which a cool and reasonable ambition looked forward without any paralysing doubts. In this growing Canada, measuring himself against the other men of the moment, he calmly foresaw his own growing place. As to money, he would make it; he was in process of making it, honourably and sufficiently.

He was well aware indeed that in the case of many women sprung from the English governing class, the ties that bind them to their own world, its traditions, and its outlook, are so strong that to try and break them would be merely to invite disaster. But then from such women his own pride — his pride in his country — would have warned his passion. It was to Elizabeth's lovely sympathy, her generous detachment, her free kindling mind — that his life had gone out. *She* would, surely, never be deterred from marrying a Cana-

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dian — if he pleased her — because it would cut her off from London and Paris, and all the ripe antiquities and traditions of English or European life? Even in the sparsely peopled North-West, with which his own future was bound up, how many English women are there — fresh, some of them, from luxurious and fastidious homes — on ranches, on prairie farms, in the Okanagan valley! 'This North-West is no longer a wilderness!' he proudly thought; 'it is no longer a leap in the dark to bring a woman of delicate nurture and cultivation to the prairies.'

So, only a few hours before, he might have flattered the tyranny of longing and desire which had taken hold upon him.

But now! All his life seemed besmirched. His passion had been no sooner born than, like a wounded bird, it fluttered to the ground. Bring upon such a woman as Elizabeth Merton the most distant responsibility for such a being as he had left behind him in the log-hut at Laggan? Link her life in however remote a fashion with that life? Treachery and sacrilege, indeed! No need for Delaine to tell him that! His father as a grim memory of the past — that Lady Merton knew. His own origins — his own story — as to that she had nothing to discover. But the man who might have dared to love her, up to that moment in the hut, was now a slave, bound to a corpse —

Finis!

And then as the anguish of this thought swept through him, and by a natural transmission of ideas, there rose in Anderson the sore and sudden memory of old, unhappy things, of the tender voices and faces of his first

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youth. The ugly vision of his degraded father had brought back upon him, through a thousand channels of association, the recollection of his mother. He saw her now — the worn, roughened face, the sweet swimming eyes; he felt her arms round him, the tears of her long agony on his face. She had endured! — he too must endure. Close, close! — he pressed her to his heart. As the radiant image of Elizabeth vanished from him in the darkness, his mother — broken, despairing, murdered in her youth — came to him and strengthened him. Let him do his duty to this poor outcast, as she would have done it — and put high thoughts from him.

He tore himself resolutely from his trance of thought, and began to walk back along the line. All the same, he would go up to Lake Louise, as he had promised, on the following morning. As far as his own intention was concerned, he would not cease to look after Lady Merton and her brother; Philip Gaddesden would soon have to be moved, and he meant to escort them to Vancouver.

Sounds approached, from the distance — the 'freight' with the doctor, climbing the steep pass. He stepped on briskly to a signalman's cabin and made arrangements to stop the train.

It was towards midnight when he and the doctor emerged from the Ginnell's cabin.

'Oh, I dare say we 'll heal those cuts,' said the doctor. 'I 've told Mrs. Ginnell what to do; but the old fellow 's in a pretty cranky state. I doubt whether he 'll trouble the world very long.'

Anderson started. With his eyes on the ground and

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his hands in his pockets, he inquired the reason for this opinion.

'Arteries! — first and foremost. It 's a wonder they 've held out so long, and then — a score of things. What can you expect?'

The speaker went into some details, discussing the case with gusto. A miner from Nevada? Queer hells often, those mining camps, whether on the Canadian or the American side of the border.

'You were acquainted with his family? — Canadian, to begin with, I understand?'

'Yes. He applied to me for help. Did he tell you much about himself?'

'No. He boasted a lot about some mine in the Comstock district which is to make his fortune, if he can raise the money to buy it up. If he can raise fifteen thousand dollars, he says, he would n't care to call Rockefeller his uncle!'

'That 's what he wants, is it?' said Anderson, absently, 'fifteen thousand dollars?'

'Apparently. Wish he may get it!' laughed the doctor. Well, keep him from drink, if you can. But I doubt if you 'll cheat the undertaker very long. Goodnight. There 'll be a train along soon that 'll pick me up.'

Anderson went back into the cabin, found that his father had dropped asleep, left money and directions with Mrs. Ginnell, and then returned to his own lodgings.

He sat down to write to Delaine. It was clear that, so far, that gentleman and Mrs. Ginnell were the only other participants in the secret of McEwen's identity.

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The old man had not revealed himself to the doctor. Did that mean that — in spite of his first reckless interview with the Englishman — he had still some notion of a bargain with his son, on the basis of the fifteen thousand dollars?

Possibly. But that son had still to determine his own line of action. When at last he began to write, he wrote steadily and without a pause. Nor was the letter long.

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CHAPTER IX

On the morning following his conversation with Anderson on the Laggan road, Delaine impatiently awaited the arrival of the morning mail from Laggan. When it came, he recognised Anderson's handwriting on one of the envelopes put into his hand. Elizabeth, having kept him company at breakfast, had gone up to sit with Philip. Nevertheless, he took the precaution of carrying the letter out of doors to read it.

It ran as follows: —

Dear Mr. Delaine, — You were rightly informed, and the man you saw is my father. I was intentionally deceived ten years ago by a false report of his death. Into that, however, I need not enter. If you talked with him, as I understand you did, for half an hour, you will, I think, have gathered that his life has been unfortunately of little advantage either to himself or others. But that also is my personal affair — and his. And although in a moment of caprice, and for reasons not yet plain to me, he revealed himself to you, he appears still to wish to preserve the assumed name and identity that he set up shortly after leaving Manitoba, seventeen years ago. As far as I am concerned, I am inclined to indulge him. But you will, of course, take your own line, and will no doubt communicate it to me. I do not imagine that my private affairs or my father's can be of any interest to you, but perhaps I may say

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that he is at present for a few days in the doctor's hands, and that I propose as soon as his health is re-established to arrange for his return to the States where his home has been for so long. I am, of course, ready to make any arrangements for his benefit that seem wise, and that he will accept. I hope to come up to Lake Louise to-morrow, and shall bring with me one or two things that Lady Merton asked me to get for her. Next week I hope she may be able and inclined to take one or two of the usual excursions from the hotel, if Mr. Gaddesden goes on as well as we all expect. I could easily make the necessary arrangements for ponies, guides, &c. Yours faithfully,

GEORGE ANDERSON.

'Upon my word, a cool hand! a very cool hand!' muttered Delaine in some perplexity, as he thrust the letter into his pocket, and strolled on towards the lake. His mind went back to the strange nocturnal encounter which had led to the development of this most annoying relation between himself and Anderson. He recalled the repulsive old man, his uneducated speech, the signs about him of low cunning and drunken living, his rambling embittered charges against his son, who, according to him, had turned his father out of the Manitoba farm in consequence of a family quarrel, and had never cared since to find out whether he was alive or dead. 'Sorry to trouble you, sir, I 'm sure — a genelman like you' — obsequious old ruffian! — 'but my sons were always kittle cattle, and George the worst of 'em all. If you would be so kind, sir, as to gie 'im a word o' preparation —'

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Delaine could hear his own impatient reply: 'I have nothing whatever, sir, to do with your business! Approach Mr. Anderson yourself if you have any claim to make.' Whereupon a half-sly, half-threatening hint from the old fellow that he might be disagreeable unless well handled; that perhaps 'the lady' would listen to him and plead for him with his son.

Lady Merton! Good heavens! Delaine had been immediately ready to promise anything in order to protect her.

Yet even now the situation was extremely annoying and improper. Here was this man, Anderson, still coming up to the hotel, on the most friendly terms with Lady Merton and her brother, managing for them, laying them under obligations, and all the time, unknown to Elizabeth, with this drunken old scamp of a father in the background, who had already half-threatened to molest her, and would be quite capable, if thwarted, of blackmailing his son through his English friends!

'What can I do?' he said to himself, in disgust. 'I have no right whatever to betray this man's private affairs; at the same time I should never forgive myself — Mrs. Gaddesden would never forgive me — if I were to allow Lady Merton to run any risk of some sordid scandal which might get into the papers. Of course this young man ought to take himself off! If he had any proper feeling whatever he would see how altogether unfitting it is that he, with his antecedents, should be associating in this very friendly way with such persons as Elizabeth Merton and her brother!'

Unfortunately the 'association' had included the rescue of Philip from the waters of Lake Louise, and

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the provision of help to Elizabeth, in a strange country, which she could have ill done without. Philip's unlucky tumble had been, certainly, doubly unlucky, if it was to be the means of entangling his sister further in an intimacy which ought never to have been begun.

And yet how to break through this spider's web? Delaine racked his brain, and could think of nothing better than delay and a pusillanimous waiting on Providence. Who knew what mad view Elizabeth might take of the whole thing, in this overstrained sentimental mood which had possessed her throughout this Canadian journey? The young man's troubles might positively recommend him in her eyes!

No! there was nothing for it but to stay on as an old friend and watchdog, responsible, at least — if Elizabeth would have none of his counsels — to her mother and kinsfolk at home, who had so clearly approved his advances in the winter, and would certainly blame Elizabeth, on her return, for the fact that his long journey had been fruitless. He magnanimously resolved that Lady Merton should not be blamed if he could help it, by any one except himself. And he had no intention at all of playing the rejected lover. The proud, well-born, fastidious Englishman stiffened as he walked. It was wounding to his self-love to stay where he was; since it was quite plain that Elizabeth could do without him, and would not regret his departure; but it was no less wounding to be dismissed, as it were, by Anderson. He would not be dismissed; he would hold his own. He too would go with them to Vancouver; and not till they were safely in charge of the Lieutenant-Governor at Victoria, would he desert his post.

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As to any further communication to Elizabeth, he realised that the hints into which he had been so far betrayed had profited neither himself nor her. She had resented them, and it was most unlikely that she would ask him for any further explanations; and that being so he had better henceforward hold his peace. Unless of course any further annoyance were threatened.

The hotel cart going down to Laggan for supplies at midday brought Anderson his answer.

DEAR MR. ANDERSON, — Your letter gave me great concern. I deeply sympathise with your situation. As far as I am concerned, I must necessarily look at the matter entirely from the point of view of my fellow-travellers. Lady Merton must not be distressed or molested. So long, however, as this is secured, I shall not feel myself at liberty to reveal a private matter which has accidentally come to my knowledge. I understand, of course, that your father will not attempt any further communication with me, and I propose to treat the interview as though it had not happened.

I will give Lady Merton your message. It seems to me doubtful whether she will be ready for excursions next week. But you are no doubt aware that the hotel makes what are apparently very excellent and complete arrangements for such things. I am sure Lady Merton would be sorry to give you avoidable trouble. However, we shall see you to-morrow, and shall of course be very glad of your counsels.

Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR MANDEVILLE DELAINE.

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Anderson's fair skin flushed scarlet as he read this letter. He thrust it into his pocket and continued to pace up and down in the patch of half-cleared ground at the back of the Ginnells' house. He perfectly understood that Delaine's letter was meant to warn him not to be too officious in Lady Merton's service. 'Don't suppose yourself indispensable — and don't at any time forget your undesirable antecedents, and compromising situation. On those conditions, I hold my tongue.'

'Pompous ass!' Anderson found it a hard task to keep his own pride in check. It was of a different variety from Delaine's, but not a whit less clamorous. Yet for Lady Merton's sake it was desirable, perhaps imperative, that he should keep on civil terms with this member of her party. A hot impulse swept through him to tell her everything, to have done with secrecy. But he stifled it. What right had he to intrude his personal history upon her? — least of all this ugly and unsavoury development of it? Pride spoke again, and self-respect. If it humiliated him to feel himself in Delaine's power, he must bear it. The only other alternatives were either to cut himself off at once from his English friends — that, of course, was what Delaine wished — or to appeal to Lady Merton's sympathy and pity. Well, he would do neither — and Delaine might go hang!

Mrs. Ginnell, with her apron over her head to shield her from the blazing sun, appeared at the corner of the house.

'You 're wanted, sir!' Her tone was sulky.

'Anything wrong?' Anderson turned apprehensively.

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'Nothing more than 'is temper, sir. He won't let yer rest, do what you will for 'im.'

Anderson went into the house. His father was sitting up in bed. Mrs. Ginnell had been endeavouring during the past hour to make her patient clean and comfortable, and to tidy his room; but had been at last obliged to desist owing to the mixture of ill-humour and bad language with which he assailed her.

'Can I do anything for you?' Anderson inquired, standing beside him.

'Get me out of this blasted hole as soon as possible! That 's about all you can do! I 've told that woman to get me my things, and help me into the other room — but she 's in your pay, I suppose. She won't do anything I tell her, drat her!'

'The doctor left orders you were to keep quiet to-day.'

McEwen vowed he would do nothing of the kind. He had no time to be lolling in bed like a fine lady. He had business to do, and must get home.

'If you get up, with this fever on you, and the leg in that state, you will have blood-poisoning,' said Anderson quietly, 'which will either kill you or detain you here for weeks. You say you want to talk business with me. Well, here I am. In an hour's time I must go to Calgary for an appointment. Suppose you take this opportunity.'

McEwen stared at his son. His blue eyes, frowning in their wrinkled sockets, gave little or no index, however, to the mind behind them. The straggling white locks falling round his blotched and feverish face caught

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Anderson's attention. Looking back thirty years he could remember his father vividly — a handsome man, solidly built, with a shock of fair hair. As a little lad he had been proud to sit high-perched beside him on the waggon which in summer drove them, every other Sunday, to a meeting-house fifteen miles away. He could see his mother at the back of the waggon with the little girls, her grey alpaca dress and cotton gloves, her patient look. His throat swelled. Nor was the pang of intolerable pity for his mother only. Deep in the melancholy of his nature and strengthened by that hateful tie of blood from which he could not escape, was a bitter, silent compassion for this outcast also. All the machinery of life set in motion and maintaining itself in the clash of circumstance for seventy years to produce *this*, at the end! Dismal questionings ran through his mind. Ought he to have acted as he had done seventeen years before? How would his mother have judged him? Was he not in some small degree responsible?

Meanwhile his father began to talk fast and querulously, with plentiful oaths from time to time, and using a local miner's slang which was not always intelligible to Anderson. It seemed it was a question of an old silver mine on a mountain-side in Idaho, deserted some ten years before when the river gravels had been exhausted, and now to be reopened, like many others in the same neighbourhood, with improved methods and machinery, tunnelling instead of washing. Silver enough to pave Montreal! Ten thousand dollars for plant, five thousand for the claim, and the thing was done.

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He became incoherently eloquent, spoke of the ease and rapidity with which the thing could be resold to a syndicate at an enormous profit, should his 'pardners' and he not care to develop it themselves. If George would find the money — why, George should make his fortune, like the rest, though he had behaved so scurvily all these years.

Anderson watched the speaker intently. Presently he began to put questions — close, technical questions. His father's eyes — till then eager and greedy — began to flicker. Anderson perceived an unwelcome surprise — annoyance — bewilderment.

'You knew, of course, that I was a mining engineer?' he said at last, pulling up in his examination.

'Well, I heard of you that onst at Dawson City,' was the slow reply. 'I supposed you were nosin' round like the rest.'

'Why, I did n't go as a mere prospector! I 'd had my training at Montreal.' And Anderson resumed his questions.

But McEwen presently took no pains to answer them. He grew indeed less and less communicative. The exact locality of the mine, the names of the partners, the precise machinery required, — Anderson, in the end, could get at neither the one nor the other. And before many more minutes had passed he had convinced himself that he was wasting his time. That there was some swindling plot in his father's mind he was certain; he was probably the tool of some shrewder confederates, who had no doubt sent him to Montreal after his legacy, and would fleece him on his return.

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'By the way, Aunt Sykes' money, how much was it?' Anderson asked him suddenly. 'I suppose you could draw on that?'

McEwen could not be got to give a plain answer. It was n't near enough, anyhow; not near. The evasion seemed to Anderson purposeless; the mere shifting and doubling that comes of long years of dishonest living. And again the question stabbed his consciousness — were his children justified in casting him so inexorably adrift?

'Well, I 'd better run down and have a look,' he said at last. 'If it 's a good thing I dare say I can find you the dollars.'

'Run down — where?' asked McEwen sharply.

'To the mine, of course. I might spare the time next week.'

'No need to trouble yourself. My pardners would n't thank me for betraying their secrets.'

'Well, you could n't expect me to provide the money without knowing a bit more about the property, could you? — without a regular survey?' said Anderson, with a laugh.

'You trust me with three or four thousand dollars,' said McEwen doggedly — 'because I 'm your father, and I give you my word. And if not, you can let it alone. I don't want any prying into my affairs.'

Anderson was silent a moment.

Then he raised his eyes.

'Are you sure it 's all square?' The tone had sharpened.

'Square? Of course it is. What are you aiming at? You 'll believe any villainy of your old father, I sup-

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pose, just the same as you always used to. I 've not had your opportunities, George. I 'm not a fine gentleman — on the trail with a parcel of English swells. I 'm a poor old broken-down miner, who wants to hole-up somewhere, and get comfortable for his old age; and if you had a heart in your body, you 'd lend a helping hand. When I saw you at Winnipeg' — the tone became a trifle plaintive and slippery — 'I ses to myself, George used to be a nice chap, with a good heart. If there 's any one ought to help me it 's my own son. And so I boarded that train. But I 'm a broken man, George, and you 've used me hard.'

'Better not talk like that,' interrupted Anderson in a clear, resolute voice. 'It won't do any good. Look here, father! Suppose you give up this kind of life, and settle down. I 'm ready to give you an allowance, and look after you. Your health is bad. To speak the truth, this mine business sounds to me pretty shady. Cut it all! I 'll put you with decent people, who 'll look after you.'

The eyes of the two men met; Anderson's insistently bright, McEwen's wavering and frowning. The June sunshine came into the small room through a striped and battered blind, illuminating the rough planks of which it was built, the 'cuts' from illustrated papers that were pinned upon them, the scanty furniture, and the untidy bed. Anderson's head and shoulders were in a full mellowed light; he held himself with an unconscious energy, answering to a certain force of feeling within; a proud strength and sincerity expressed itself through every detail of attitude and gesture; yet perhaps the delicacy, or rather sensibility, mingling with

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the pride, would have been no less evident to a seeing eye. There was Highland blood in him, and a touch therefore of the Celtic responsiveness, the Celtic magnetism. The old man opposite to him in shadow, with his back to the light, had a crouching dangerous look. It was as though he recognised something in his son for ever lost to himself; and repulsed it, half enviously, half malignantly.

But he did not apparently resent Anderson's proposal. He said sulkily, 'Oh, I dessay you 'd like to put me away. But I 'm not doddering yet.'

All the same he listened in silence to the plan that Anderson developed, puffing the while at the pipe which he had made Mrs. Ginnell give him.

'I shan't stay on this side,' he said, at last, decidedly. 'There 's a thing or two that might turn up agin me — and fellows as 'ud do me a bad turn if they come across me — dudes, as I used to know in Dawson City. I shan't stay in Canada. You can make up your mind to that. Besides, the winter 'ud kill me!'

Anderson accordingly proposed San Francisco, or Los Angeles. Would his father go for a time to a Salvation Army colony near Los Angeles? Anderson knew the chief officials — capital men, with no cant about them. Fruit farming — a beautiful climate — care in sickness — no drink — as much work or as little as he liked — and all expenses paid.

McEwen laughed out — a short sharp laugh — at the mention of the Salvation Army. But he listened patiently, and at the end even professed to think there might be something in it. As to his own scheme, he dropped all mention of it. Yet Anderson was under

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no illusion; there it lay sparkling, as it were, at the back of his sly wolfish eyes.

'How in blazes could you take me down?' muttered McEwen — 'Thought you was took up with these English swells.'

'I 'm not taken up with anything that would prevent my looking after you,' said Anderson rising. 'You let Mrs. Ginnell attend to you, — get the leg well — and we 'll see.'

McEwen eyed him — his good looks and his dress, his gentleman's refinement; and the shaggy white brows of the old miner drew closer together.

'What did you cast me off like that for, George?' he asked.

Anderson turned away.

'Don't rake up the past. Better not.'

'Where are my other sons, George?'

'In Montreal, doing well.' Anderson gave the details of their appointments and salaries.

'And never a thought of their old father, I 'll be bound!' said McEwen, at the end, with slow vindictiveness.

'You forget that it was your own doing; we believed you dead.'

'Aye! — you had n't left a man much to come home for! — and all for an accident! — a thing as might ha' happened to any man.'

The speaker's voice had grown louder. He stared sombrely, defiantly, at his companion.

Anderson stood with his hands on his sides, looking through the further window. Then slowly he put his hand into his pocket and withdrew from it a large

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pocket-book. Out of the pocket-book he took a delicately made leather case, holding it in his hand a moment, and glancing uncertainly at the figure in the bed.

'What ha' you got there?' growled McEwen.

Anderson crossed the room. His own face had lost its colour. As he reached his father, he touched a spring, and held out his hand with the case lying open within it.

It contained a miniature, — of a young woman in the midst of a group of children.

'Do you remember that photograph that was done of them — in a tent, — when you took us all into Winnipeg for the first agricultural show?' he said hoarsely. 'I had a copy — that was n't burnt. At Montreal, there was a French artist one year, that did these things. I got him to do this.'

McEwen stared at the miniature — the sweet-faced Scotch woman, the bunch of children. Then with a brusque movement he turned his face to the wall, and closed his eyes.

Anderson's lips opened once or twice as though to speak. Some imperious emotion seemed to be trying to force its way. But he could not find words; and at last he returned the miniature to his pocket, walked quietly to the door, and went out of the room.

The sound of the closing door brought immense relief to McEwen. He turned again in bed, and relit his pipe, shaking off the impression left by the miniature as quickly as possible. What business had George to upset him like that? He was down enough on his luck as it was.

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He smoked away, gloomily thinking over the conversation. It did n't look like getting any money out of this close-fisted Puritanical son of his. Survey indeed! McEwen found himself shaken by a kind of internal convulsion as he thought of the revelations that would come out. George was a fool.

In his feverish reverie, many lines of thought crossed and danced in his brain; and every now and then he was tormented by the craving for alcohol. The Salvation Army proposal half amused, half infuriated him. He knew all about their colonies. Trust him! Your own master for seventeen years, — mixed up in a lot of jobs it would n't do to go blabbing to the Mounted Police — and then to finish up with those hymn-singing fellows! — George was most certainly a fool! Yet dollars ought to be screwed out of him — somehow.

Presently, to get rid of some unpleasant reflexions, the old man stretched out his hand for a copy of the *Vancouver Sentinel* that was lying on the bed, and began to read it idly. As he did so, a paragraph drew his attention. He gripped the paper, and, springing up in bed, read it twice, peering into it, his features quivering with eagerness. The passage described the 'hold up' of a Northern Pacific train, at a point not very far south of the Canadian border. By the help of masks, and a few sticks of dynamite, the thing had been very smartly done — a whole train terrorised, the mail van broken open and a large 'swag' captured. Billy Symonds, the notorious train robber from Montana, was suspected, and there was a hue and cry through the whole border after him and his accomplices, amongst whom, so it was said, was a band from

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the Canadian side, — foreign miners mixed up in some of the acts of violence which had marked the strike of the year before.

Bill Symonds! — McEwen threw himself excitedly from side to side, unable to keep still. *He* knew Symonds — a chap and a half! Why did n't he come and try it on this side of the line? Heaps of money going backwards and forwards over the railway! All these thousands of dollars paid out in wages week by week to these construction camps — must come from somewhere in cash — Winnipeg or Montreal. He began to play with the notion, elaborating and refining it; till presently a whole epic of attack and capture was rushing through his half crazy brain.

He had dropped the paper, and was staring abstractedly through the foot of open window close beside him, which the torn blind did not cover. Outside, through the clearing with its stumps of jack-pine, ran a path, a short cut, connecting the station at Laggan with a section-house further up the line.

As McEwen's eyes followed it, he began to be aware of a group of men emerging from the trees on the Laggan side, and walking in single file along the path. Navvies apparently — carrying bundles and picks. The path came within a few yards of the window, and of the little stream that supplied the house with water.

Suddenly, McEwen sprang up in bed. The two foremost men paused beside the water, mopped their hot faces, and taking drinking cups out of their pockets, stooped down to the stream. The old man in the cabin bed watched them with a fierce intentness; and as they straightened themselves and were about to follow their

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companions who were already out of sight, he gave a low call.

The two started and looked around them. Their hands went to their pockets. McEwen swung himself round so as to reach the window better, and repeated his call — this time with a different inflexion. The men exchanged a few hurried words. Carefully scrutinising the house, they noticed a newspaper waving cautiously in an open window. One of them came forward, the other remained by the stream bathing his feet and ankles in the water.

No one else was in sight. Mrs. Ginnell was cooking on the other side of the house. Anderson had gone off to catch his train. For twenty minutes, the man outside leant against the window-sash apparently lounging and smoking. Nothing could be seen from the path, but a battered blind flapping in the June breeze, and a dark space of room beyond.

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CHAPTER X

THE days passed on. Philip in the comfortable hotel at Lake Louise was recovering steadily, though not rapidly, from the general shock of his immersion. Elizabeth, while nursing him tenderly, could yet find time to walk and climb, plunging spirit and sense in the beauty of the Rockies.

On these excursions Delaine generally accompanied her; and she bore it well. Secretly she cherished some astonishment and chagrin that Anderson could apparently be with them so little on these bright afternoons among the forest trails and upper lakes, although she generally found that the plans of the day had been suggested and organised by him, by telephone from Laggan, to the kind and competent Scotch lady who was the manager of the hotel. It seemed to her that he had promised his company; whereas, as a rule, now he withheld it; and her pride was put to it, on her own part, not to betray any sign of discontent. He spoke vaguely of 'business,' and on one occasion, apparently, had gone off for three days to Saskatchewan on matters connected with the coming general election.

From the newspaper, or the talk of visitors in the hotel, or the railway officials who occasionally found their way to Lake Louise to make courteous inquiries after the English party, Elizabeth became, indeed, more and more fully aware of the estimation in which Anderson was beginning to be held. He was already

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a personage in the North-West; was said to be sure of success in his contest at Donaldminster, and of an immediate Parliamentary career at Ottawa. These prophecies seemed to depend more upon the man's character than his actual achievements; though, indeed, the story of the great strike, as she had gathered it once or twice from the lips of eye-witnesses, was a fine one. For weeks he had carried his life in his hand among thousands of infuriated navvies and miners — since the miners had made common cause with the railwaymen — with a cheerfulness, daring, and resource which in the end had wrung success from an apparently hopeless situation; a success attended, when all was over, by an amazing effusion of good-will among both masters and men, especially towards Anderson himself, and a general improvement in the industrial temper and atmosphere of the North-West.

The recital of these things stirred Elizabeth's pulses. But why did she never hear them from himself? Surely he had offered her friendship, and the rights of friendship. How else could he justify the scene at Field, when he had so brusquely probed her secret anxieties for Philip? Her pride rebelled when she thought of it, when she recalled her wet eyes, her outstretched hand. Mere humiliation! — in the case of a casual or indifferent acquaintance. No; on that day, certainly, he had claimed the utmost privileges, had even strained the rights, of a friend, a real friend. But his behaviour since had almost revived her first natural resentment.

Thoughts like these ran in her mind, and occasionally affected her manner when they did meet. Ander-

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son found her more reserved, and noticed that she did not so often ask him for small services as of old. He suffered under the change; but it was, he knew, his own doing, and he did not alter his course.

Whenever he did come, he sat mostly with Philip, over whom he had gradually established a remarkable influence, not by any definite acts or speeches, but rather by the stoicism of his own mode of life, coupled with a proud or laughing contempt for certain vices and self-indulgences to which it was evident that he himself felt no temptation. As soon as Philip felt himself sufficiently at home with the Canadian to begin to jibe at his teetotalism, Anderson seldom took the trouble to defend himself; yet the passion of moral independence in his nature, of loathing for any habit that weakens and enslaves the will, infected the English lad whether he would or no. 'There 's lots of things he 's stick-stock mad on,' Philip would say impatiently to his sister. But the madness told. And the madman was all the while consolingly rich in other and more attractive kinds of madness — the follies of the hunter and climber, of the man who holds his neck as dross in comparison with the satisfaction of certain wild instincts that the Rockies excite in him. Anderson had enjoyed his full share of adventures with goat and bear. Such things are the customary amusements, it seemed, of a young engineer in the Rockies. Beside them, English covert-shooting is a sport for babes; and Philip ceased to boast of his own prowess in that direction. He would listen, indeed, open-mouthed, to Anderson's yarns, lying on his long chair on the verandah — a graceful languid figure — with a coyote rug heaped

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about him. It was clear to Elizabeth that Anderson on his side had become very fond of the boy. There was no trouble he would not take for him. And gradually, silently, proudly, she allowed him to take less and less for herself.

Once or twice Arthur Delaine's clumsy hints occurred to her. Was there, indeed, some private matter weighing on the young man's mind? She would not allow herself to speculate upon it; though she could not help watching the relation between the two men with some curiosity. It was polite enough; but there was certainly no cordiality in it; and once or twice she suspected a hidden understanding.

Delaine meanwhile felt a kind of dull satisfaction in the turn of events. The intimacy between Anderson and Lady Merton had certainly been checked, or was at least not advancing. Whether it was due to his own hints to Elizabeth, or to Anderson's chivalrous feeling, he did not know. But he wrote every mail to Mrs. Gaddesden discreetly, yet not without giving her some significant information; he did whatever small services were possible in the case of a man who went about Canada as a Johnny Head-in-air, with his mind in another hemisphere; and it was understood that he was to leave them at Vancouver. In the forced association of their walks, and rides, Elizabeth showed herself gay, kind, companionable; although often, and generally for no reason that he could discover, something sharp and icy in her would momentarily emerge, and he would find himself driven back within bounds that he had perhaps been tempted to transgress. And the result of it all was that he fell day by day more torment-

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ingly in love with her. Those placid matrimonial ambitions with which he had left England had been all swept away; and as he followed her — she on pony-back, he on foot — along the mountain trails, watching the lightness of her small figure against the splendid background of peak and pine, he became a troubled, introspective person; concentrating upon himself and his disagreeable plight the attention he had hitherto given to a delightful outer world, sown with the *caches* of antiquity, in order to amuse him.

Meanwhile the situation in the cabin at Laggan appeared to be steadily improving. McEwen had abruptly ceased to be a rebellious and difficult patient. The doctor's orders had been obeyed; the leg had healed rapidly; and he no longer threatened or cajoled Mrs. Ginnell on the subject of liquor. As far as Anderson was concerned, he was generally sulky and uncommunicative. But Anderson got enough out of him by degrees to be able to form a fairly complete idea of his father's course of life since the false report of his death in the Yukon. He realised an existence on the fringe of civilisation, with its strokes of luck neutralised by drink, and its desperate, and probably criminal, moments. And as soon as his father got well enough to limp along the trails of the Laggan valley, the son noticed incidents which appeared to show that the old man, while playing the part of the helpless stranger, was by no means without acquaintance among the motley host of workmen that were constantly passing through. The links of international trade unionism no doubt accounted for it. But in McEwen's case, the fraternity to which he belonged seemed to apply only

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to the looser and more disreputable elements among the emigrant throng.

But at the same time he had shown surprising docility in the matter of Anderson's counsels. All talk of the Idaho mine had dropped between them, as though by common consent. Anderson had laid hands upon a young man, a Salvation Army officer in Vancouver, with whom his father consented to lodge for the next six weeks; and further arrangements were to be postponed till the end of that period. Anderson hoped, indeed, to get his father settled there before Lady Merton moved from Lake Louise. For in a few days now, the private car was to return from the coast, in order to take up the English party.

McEwen's unexpected complaisance led to a great softening in Anderson's feeling towards his father. All those inner compunctions that haunt a just and scrupulous nature came freely into play. And his evangelical religion — for he was a devout though liberal-minded Presbyterian — also entered in. Was it possible that he might be the agent of his father's redemption? The idea, the hope, produced in him occasional hidden exaltations — flights of prayer — mystical memories of his mother — which lightened what was otherwise a time of bitter renunciation, and determined wrestling with himself.

During the latter days of this fortnight, indeed, he could not do enough for his father. He had made all the Vancouver arrangements; he had supplied him amply with clothes and other personal necessaries; and he came home early at nights in order to sit and smoke with him. Mrs. Ginnell, looking in of an evening, be-

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held what seemed to her a touching sight, though one far beyond the deserts of such creatures as McEwen — the son reading the newspaper aloud, or playing dominoes with his father, or just smoking and chatting. Her hard common sense as a working-woman suggested to her that Anderson was nursing illusions; and she scornfully though silently hoped that the 'old rip' would soon, one way or another, be off his shoulders.

But the illusions, for the moment, were Anderson's sustenance. His imagination, denied a more personal and passionate food, gave itself with fire to the redeeming of an outlaw, and the paying of a spiritual debt.

It was a Wednesday. After a couple of drizzling days the weather was again fair. The trains rolling through the pass began with these early days of July to bring a first crop of holiday-makers from Eastern Canada and the States; the hotels were filling up. On the morrow McEwen was to start for Vancouver. And a letter from Philip Gaddesden, delivered at Laggan in the morning, had bitterly reproached Anderson for neglecting them, and leaving him, in particular, to be bored to death by glaciers and tourists.

Early in the afternoon Anderson took his way up the mountain road to Lake Louise. He found the English travellers established among the pines by the lake side, Philip half asleep in a hammock strung between two pines, while Delaine was reading to Elizabeth from an article in an archæological review on 'Some Fresh Light on the Cippus of Palestrina.'

Lady Merton was embroidering; it seemed to Anderson that she was tired or depressed. Delaine's booming voice, and the frequent Latin passages interspersed

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with stammering translations of his own, in which he appeared to be interminably tangled, would be enough — the Canadian thought — to account for a subdued demeanour; and there was, moreover, a sudden thunderous heat in the afternoon.

Elizabeth received him a little stiffly, and Philip roused himself from sleep only to complain 'You've been four mortal days without coming near us!'

'I had to go away. I have been to Regina.'

'On politics?' asked Delaine.

'Yes. We had a couple of meetings and a row.'

'Jolly for you!' grumbled Philip. 'But we've had a beastly time. Ask Elizabeth.'

'Nothing but the weather!' said Elizabeth carelessly. 'We could n't even see the mountains.'

But why, as she spoke, should the delicate cheek change colour, suddenly and brightly? The answering blood leapt in Anderson. She *had* missed him, though she would not show it.

Delaine began to question him about Saskatchewan. The Englishman's forms of conversation were apt to be tediously inquisitive, and Anderson had often resented them. To-day, however, he let himself be catechised patiently enough, while all the time conscious, from head to foot, of one person only — one near and yet distant person.

Elizabeth wore a dress of white linen, and a broad hat of soft blue. The combination of the white and blue with her brown hair, and the pale refinement of her face, seemed to him ravishing, enchanting. So were the movements of her hands at work, and all the devices of her light self-command; more attractive,

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infinitely, to his mature sense than the involuntary tremor of girlhood.

'Hallo! What does Stewart want?' said Philip, raising himself in his hammock. The hunter who had been the companion of his first unlucky attempt at fishing was coming towards them. The boy sprang to the ground, and, vowing that he would fish the following morning, whatever Elizabeth might say, went off to consult.

She looked after him with a smile and a sigh.

'Better give him his head!' laughed Anderson. Then, from where he stood, he studied her a moment, unseen, except by Delaine, who was sitting among the moss a few yards away, and had temporarily forgotten the cippus of Palestrina.

Suddenly the Canadian came forward.

'Have you explored that path yet, over the shoulder?' he said to Lady Merton, pointing to the fine promontory of purple piny rock which jutted out in front of the glacier on the southern side of the lake.

She shook her head; but was it not still too early and too hot to walk? Anderson persisted. The path was in shade, and would repay climbing. She hesitated — and yielded; making a show of asking Delaine to come with them. Delaine also hesitated, and refrained; making a show of preferring the archæological review. He was left to watch them mount the first stretches of the trail; while Philip strolled along the lake with his companion in the slouch hat and leggings, deep in tales of bass and trout.

Elizabeth and Anderson climbed a long sloping ascent through the pines. The air was warm and scented;

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the heat of the sun on the moistened earth was releasing all its virtues and fragrances, overpowering in the open places, and stealing even through the shadows. When the trees broke or receded, the full splendour of the glacier was upon them to their left; and then for a space they must divine it as a presence behind the actual, faintly gleaming and flashing through the serried ranks of the forest. There were heaths and mosses under the pines; but otherwise for a while the path was flowerless; and Elizabeth discontentedly remarked it. Anderson smiled.

'Wait a little! — or you'll have to apologise to the Rockies.'

He looked down upon her, and saw that her small face had bloomed into a vivacity and charm that startled him. Was it only the physical effort and pleasure of the climb? As for himself, it took all the power of a strong will to check the happy tumult in his heart.

Elizabeth asked him of his Saskatchewan journey. He described to her the growing town he hoped to represent — the rush of its new life.

'On one Sunday morning there was nothing — the bare prairie; by the next! — so to speak! — there was a town all complete, with a hotel, an elevator, a bank, and a church. That was ten years ago. Then the railway came; I saw the first train come in, garlanded and wreathed with flowers. Now there are eight thousand people. They have reserved land for a park along the river, and sent for a landscape gardener from England to lay it out; they have made trees grow on the prairie; they have built a high school and a concert hall; the municipality is full of ambitions; and all round the

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town, settlers are pouring in. On market day you find yourself in a crowd of men, talking cattle and crops, the last thing in binders and threshers, as farmers do all over the world. But yet you could n't match that crowd in the old world.'

'Which you don't know,' put in Elizabeth, with her sly smile.

'Which I don't know,' repeated Anderson meekly. 'But I guess. And I am thinking of sayings of yours. Where in Europe can you match the sense of *boundlessness* we have here — boundless space, boundless opportunity? It often makes fools of us: it intoxicates, turns our heads. There is a germ of madness in this North-West. I have seen men destroyed by it. But it is Nature who is the witch. She brews the cup.'

'All very well for the men,' Elizabeth said, musing — 'and the strong men. About the women in this country I can't make up my mind.'

'You think of the drudgery, the domestic hardships?'

'There are some ladies in the hotel, from British Columbia. They are in easy circumstances — and the daughter is dying of overwork! The husband has a large fruit farm, but they can get no service; the fruit rots on the ground; and the two women are worn to death.'

'Aye,' said Anderson gravely. 'This country breeds life, but it also devours it.'

'I asked these two women — Englishwomen — if they wanted to go home, and give it up. They fell upon me with scorn.'

'And you?'

Elizabeth sighed.

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'I admired them. But could I imitate them? I thought of the house at home; of the old servants; how it runs on wheels; how pretty and — and dignified it all is: everybody at their post; no drudgery, no disorder.'

'It is a dignity that costs you dear,' said Anderson, almost roughly, and with a change of countenance. 'You sacrifice to it things a thousand times more real, more human.'

'Do we?' said Elizabeth; and then, with a drop in her voice: 'Dear, dear England!' She had paused to take breath, and as she leant resting against a tree he saw her expression change, as though a struggle passed through her.

The trees had opened behind them, and they looked back over the lake, the hotel, and the wide Laggan valley beyond. In all that valley, not a sign of human life, but the line of the railway. Not a house, not a village to be seen; and at this distance the forest appeared continuous, till it died against the rock and snow of the higher peaks.

For the first time, Elizabeth was homesick; for the first time, she shrank from a raw, untamed land where the House of Life is only now rearing its walls and its roof-timbers, and all its warm furnishings, its ornaments and hangings are still to add. She thought of the English landscapes, of the woods and uplands round her Cumberland home; of the old church, the embowered cottages, the lichened farms; the generations of lives that have died into the soil, like the summer leaves of the trees; of the ghosts to be felt in the air — ghosts of squire and labourer and farmer, alive still in the men and women of the present, as they too will

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live in the unborn. Her heart went out to England; fled back to it over the seas, as though renewing, in penitence, an allegiance that had wavered. And Anderson divined it, in the yearning of her just-parted lips, in the quivering, restrained sweetness of her look.

His own heart sank. They resumed their walk, and presently the path grew steeper. Some of it was rough hewn in the rock, and encumbered by roots of trees. Anderson held out a helping hand; her fingers slipped willingly into it; her light weight hung upon him, and every step was to him a mingled delight and bitterness.

'Hard work!' he said presently, with his encouraging smile; 'but you'll be paid.'

The pines grew closer, and then suddenly lightened. A few more steps, and Elizabeth gave a cry of pleasure. They were on the edge of an alpine meadow, encircled by dense forest, and sloping down beneath their feet to a lake that lay half in black shadow, half blazing in the afternoon sun. Beyond was a tossed wilderness of peaks to west and south. Light masses of cumulus cloud were rushing over the sky, and driving waves of blue and purple colour across the mountain masses and the forest slopes. Golden was the sinking light and the sunlit half of the lake; golden the western faces and edges of the mountain world; while beyond the valley, where ran the white smoke of a train, there hung in the northern sky a dream-world of undiscovered snows, range, it seemed, beyond range, remote, ethereal; an Olympus of the old gods of this vast land, where one might guess them still throned at bay, majestic, inviolate.

But it was the flowers that held Elizabeth mute.

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Anderson had brought her to a wild garden of incredible beauty. Scarlet and blue, purple and pearl and opal, rose-pink and lavender-grey — the flower-field ran about her, as though Persephone herself had just risen from the shadow of this nameless northern lake, and the new earth had broken into eager flame at her feet. Painters' brush, harebell, speedwell, golden-brown gaillardias, silvery hawkweed, columbines yellow and blue, heaths, and lush grasses, — Elizabeth sank down among them in speechless joy. Anderson gathered handfuls of columbine and vetch, of harebell and heath, and filled her lap with them, till she gently stopped him.

'No! Let me only look!'

And with her hands round her knees she sat motionless and still. Anderson threw himself down beside her. Fragrance, colour, warmth; the stir of an endless self-sufficient life; the fruitfulness and bounty of the earth: these things wove their ancient spell about them. Every little rush of the breeze seemed an invitation and a caress.

Presently she thanked him for having brought her there, and said something of remembering it in England.

'As one who will never see it again?' He turned and faced her, smiling. But behind his frank, pleasant look there was something from which she shrank.

'I shall hardly see it again,' she said, hesitating. 'Perhaps that makes it the more — the more touching. One clings to it the more — the impression! — because it is so fugitive — will be so soon gone.'

He was silent a moment, then said abruptly —

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'And the upshot of it all is, that you could not imagine living in Canada?'

She started.

'I never said so. Of course I could imagine living in Canada!'

'But you think, for women, the life up here in the North-West — is too hard?'

She looked at him timidly.

'That's because I look at it from my English point of view. I am afraid English life makes weaklings of us.'

'No! — not of you!' he said, almost scornfully. 'Any life that seemed to you worth while would find you strong enough for it. I am sure of that.'

Elizabeth smiled and shrugged her shoulders. He went on — almost as though pleading with her.

'And as to our Western life — which you will soon have left so far behind — it strains and tests the women — true! — but it rewards them. They have a great place among us. It is like the women of the early races. We listen to them in the house, and on the land; we depend on them indoors and out; their husbands and their sons worship them!'

Elizabeth flushed involuntarily; but she met him gaily.

'In England, too! Come and see!'

'I shall probably be in England next spring.'

Elizabeth made a sudden movement.

'I thought you would be in political life here!'

'I have had an offer — an exciting and flattering offer. May I tell you?'

He turned to her eagerly; and she smiled her sym-

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pathy, her curiosity. Whereupon he took a letter from his pocket — a letter from the Dominion Prime Minister, offering him a mission of inquiry to England, on some important matters connected with labour and emigration. The letter was remarkable, addressed to a man so young, and on the threshold of his political career.

Elizabeth congratulated him warmly.

'Of course you will come and stay with us!'

It was his turn to redden.

'You are very kind,' he said formally. 'As you know, I shall have everything to learn.'

'I will show you *our* farms!' cried Elizabeth, 'and all our dear decrepit life — our little chess-board of an England.'

'How proud you are, you Englishwomen!' he said, half frowning. 'You run yourselves down — and at bottom there is a pride like Lucifer's.'

'But it is not my pride,' she said, hurt, 'any more than yours. We are yours — and you are ours. One state! — one country.'

'No! — don't let us sentimentalise. We have our own future. It is not yours.'

'But you are loyal!' The note was one of pain.

'Are we? Foolish word! Yes, we are loyal, as you are — loyal to a common ideal, a common mission in the world.'

'To blood also! — and to history?' Her voice was almost entreating. What he said seemed to jar with other and earlier sayings of his, which had stirred in her a patriotic pleasure.

He smiled at her emotion — her implied reproach.

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'Yes! — we stand together. We march together. But Canada will have her own history; and you must not try to make it for her.'

Their eyes met; in hers exaltation, in his a touch of sternness, a moment's revelation of the Covenanter in his soul.

Then as the delightful vision of her among the flowers, in her white dress, the mountains behind and around her, imprinted itself on his senses, he was conscious of a moment of intolerable pain. Between her and him — as it were — the abyss opened. The trembling waves of colour in the grass, the noble procession of the clouds, the gleaming of the snows, the shadow of the valleys — they were all wiped out. He saw instead a small unsavoury room — the cunning eyes and coarse mouth of his father. He saw his own future as it must now be; weighted with this burden, this secret; if indeed it were still to be a secret; if it were not rather the wiser and the manlier plan to have done with secrecy.

Elizabeth rose with a little shiver. The wind had begun to blow cold from the north-west.

'How soon can we run down? I hope Mr. Arthur will have sent Philip indoors.'

Anderson left Lake Louise about eight o'clock, and hurried down the Laggan road. His mind was divided between the bitter-sweet of these last hours with Elizabeth Merton, and anxieties, small practical anxieties, about his father. There were arrangements still to make. He was not himself going to Vancouver. McEwen had lately shown a strong and petulant wish to

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preserve his incognito, or what was left of it. He would not have his son's escort. George might come and see him at Vancouver; and that would be time enough to settle up for the winter.

So Ginnell, owner of the boarding-house, a stalwart Irishman of six foot three, had been appointed to see him through his journey, settle him with his new protectors, and pay all necessary expenses.

Anderson knocked at his father's door and was allowed to enter. He found McEwen walking up and down his room, with the aid of a stick, irritably pushing chairs and clothes out of his way. The room was in squalid disorder, and its inmate had a flushed, exasperated look that did not escape Anderson's notice. He thought it probable that his father was already repenting his consent to go to Vancouver, and he avoided general conversation as much as possible. McEwen complained of having been left alone; abused Mrs. Ginnell; vowed she had starved and ill-treated him; and then, to Anderson's surprise, broke out against his son for having refused to provide him with the money he wanted for the mine, and so ruined his last chance. Anderson hardly replied; but what he did say was as soothing as possible; and at last the old man flung himself on his bed, excitement dying away in a sulky taciturnity.

Before Anderson left his room, Ginnell came in bringing his accounts for certain small expenses. Anderson, standing with his back to his father, took out a pocket-book full of dollar bills. At Calgary the day before a friend had repaid him a loan of a thousand dollars. He gave Ginnell a certain sum; talked to him

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in a low voice for a time, thinking his father had dropped asleep; and then dismissed him, putting the money in his pocket.

'Good-night, father,' he said, standing beside the bed.

McEwen opened his eyes.

'Eh?'

The eyes into which Anderson looked had no sleep in them. They were wild and bloodshot, and again Anderson felt a pang of helpless pity for a dishonoured and miserable old age.

'I'm sure you'll get on at Vancouver, father,' he said gently. 'And I shall be there next week.'

His father growled some unintelligible answer. As Anderson went to the door he again called after him angrily, 'You were a d—— fool, George, not to find those dibs.'

'What, for the mine?' Anderson laughed. 'Oh, we'll go into that again at Vancouver.'

McEwen made no reply, and Anderson left him.

Anderson woke before seven. The long evening had passed into the dawn with scarcely any darkness, and the sun was now high. He sprang up, and dressed hastily. Going into the passage he saw to his astonishment that while the door of the Ginnells' room was still closed, his father's was wide open. He walked in. The room and the bed were empty. The contents of a box carefully packed by Ginnell — mostly with new clothes — the night before, were lying strewn about the room. But McEwen's old clothes were gone, his gun and revolver also, his pipes and tobacco.

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Anderson roused Ginnell, and they searched the house and its neighbourhood — in vain. On going back into his own room Anderson noticed an open drawer. He had placed his pocket-book there the night before, but without locking the drawer. It was gone, and in its place was a dirty scrap of paper.

'Don't you try chivvying me, George, for you won't get any good of it. You let me alone, and I'll let you. You were a stingy fellow about that money, so I've took some. Good-bye.'

Sick at heart, Anderson resumed the search, further afield. He sent Ginnell along the line to make confidential inquiries. He telegraphed to persons known to him at Golden, Revelstoke, Kamloops, Ashcroft — all to no purpose. Twenty-four — thirty-six hours passed and nothing had been heard of the fugitive.

He felt himself baffled and tricked, with certain deep instincts and yearnings wounded to the death. The brutal manner of his father's escape — the robbery — the letter — had struck him hard.

When Friday night came, and still no news, Anderson found himself at the C.P.R. hotel at Field. He was stupid with fatigue and depression. But he had been in telephonic communication all the afternoon with Delaine and Lady Merton at Lake Louise, as to their departure for the Pacific. They knew nothing and should know nothing of his own catastrophe; their plans should not suffer.

He went out into the summer night to take breath, and commune with himself. The night was balmy; the stars glorious. On a siding near the hotel stood the private car which had arrived that evening from Van-

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couver, and was to go to Laggan the following morning to fetch the English party. They were to pick him up, on the return, at Field.

He had failed to save his father, and his honest effort had been made in vain. Humiliation and disappointment overshadowed him. Passionately, his whole soul turned to Elizabeth. He did not yet grasp all the bearings of what had happened. But he began to count the hours to the time when he should see her.

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CHAPTER XI

A DAY of showers and breaking clouds — of sudden sunlight, and broad clefts of blue; a day when shreds of mist are lightly looped and meshed about the higher peaks of the Rockies and the Selkirks, dividing the forest world below from the ice world above. . . .

The car was slowly descending the Kicking Horse Pass, at the rear of a heavy train. Elizabeth, on her platform, was feasting her eyes once more on the great savage landscape, on these peaks and valleys that have never till now known man, save as the hunter, treading them once or twice perhaps in a century. Dreamily her mind contrasted them with the Alps, where from all time man has laboured and sheltered, blending his life, his births and deaths, his loves and hates with the glaciers and the forests, wresting his food from the valleys, creeping height over height to the snow line, writing his will on the country, so that in our thought of it he stands first, and Nature second. The Swiss mountains and streams breathe a 'mighty voice,' lent to them by the free passion and aspiration of man; they are interfused and interwoven for ever with human fate. But in the Rockies and the Selkirks man counts for nothing in their past; and, except as wayfarer and playfellow, it is probable that he will count for nothing in their future. They will never be the familiar companions of his work and prayer and love; a couple of railways, indeed, will soon be driven

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through them, linking the life of the prairies to the life of the Pacific; but, except for this conquest of them as barriers in his path, when his summer camps in them are struck, they, sheeted in a winter inaccessible and superb, know him and his puny deeds no more, till again the lakes melt and the trees bud. This it is that gives them their strange majesty, and clothes their brief summer, their laughing fields of flowers, their thickets of red raspberry and slopes of strawberry, their infinity of gleaming lakes and foaming rivers — rivers that turn no mill and light no town — with a charm, half magical, half mocking.

And yet, though the travelled intelligence made comparisons of this kind, it was not with the mountains that Elizabeth's deepest mind was busy. She took really keener note of the railway itself, and its appurtenances. For here man had expressed himself; had pitched his battle with a fierce Nature and won it; as no doubt he will win other similar battles in the coming years. Through Anderson this battle had become real to her. She looked eagerly at the construction camps in the pass; at the new line that is soon to supersede the old; at the bridges and tunnels and snow-sheds, by which contriving man had made his purpose prevail over the physical forces of this wild world. The great railway spoke to her in terms of human life; and because she had known Anderson she understood its message.

Secretly and sorely her thoughts clung to him. Just as, insensibly, her vision of Canada had changed so had her vision of Anderson. Canada was no longer mere fairy tale and romance; Anderson was no longer

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merely its picturesque exponent or representative. She had come to realise him as a man, with a man's cares and passions; and her feelings about him had begun to change her life.

Arthur Delaine, she supposed, had meant to warn her that Mr. Anderson was falling in love with her and that she had no right to encourage it. Her thoughts went back intently over the last fortnight — Anderson's absences — his partial withdrawal from the intimacy which had grown up between himself and her — their last walk at Lake Louise. The delight of that walk was still in her veins, and at last she was frank with herself about it! In his attitude towards her, now that she forced herself to face the truth, she must needs recognise a passionate eagerness, restrained no less passionately; a profound impulse, strongly felt, and strongly held back. By mere despair of attainment? — or by the scruple of an honourable self-control?

Could she — *could* she marry a Canadian? There was the central question, out at last! — irrevocable!— Writ large on the mountains and the forests, as she sped through them. Could she, possessed by inheritance of all that is most desirable and delightful in English society, linked with its great interests and its dominant class, and through them with the rich cosmopolitan life of cultivated Europe — could she tear herself from that old soil, and that dear familiar environment? Had the plant vitality enough to bear transplanting? She did not put her question in these terms; but that was what her sudden tumult and distress of mind really meant.

Looking up, she saw Delaine beside her. Well, there

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was Europe, and at her feet! For the last month she had been occupied in scorning it. English country-house life, artistic society and pursuits, London in the season, Paris and Rome in the spring, English social and political influence — there they were beside her. She had only to stretch out her hand.

A chill, uncomfortable laughter seemed to fill the inner mind through which the debate passed, while all the time she was apparently looking at the landscape, and chatting with her brother or Delaine. She fell into an angry contempt for that mood of imaginative delight in which she had journeyed through Canada so far. What! treat a great nation in the birth as though it were there for her mere pleasure and entertainment? Make of it a mere spectacle and pageant, and turn with disgust from the notion that you too could ever throw in your lot with it, fight as a foot-soldier in its ranks, on equal terms, for life and death!

She despised herself. And yet — and yet! She thought of her mother — her frail, refined, artistic mother; of a hundred subtleties and charms and claims in that world she understood, in which she had been reared; of all that she must leave behind, were she asked, and did she consent, to share the life of a Canadian of Anderson's type. What would it be to fail in such a venture! To dare it, and then to find life sinking in sands of cowardice and weakness! Very often, and sometimes as though by design, Anderson had spoken to her of the part to be played by women in Canada; not in the defensive, optimistic tone of their last walk together, but forbiddingly, with a kind of rough insistence. Substantial comfort, a large amount of applied

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science — that could be got. But the elegancies and refinements of English rich life in a prairie farm — impossible! A woman who marries a Canadian farmer, large or small, must put her own hands to the drudgery of life, to the cooking, sewing, baking, that keep man — animal man — alive. Some degree of rude service money can command in the North-West; but it is a service which only the housewife's personal co-operation can make tolerable. Life returns, in fact, to the old primitive pattern; and a woman counts on the prairie according as 'she looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness.'

Suddenly Elizabeth perceived her own hands lying on her lap. Useless bejewelled things! When had they ever fed a man or nursed a child?

Under her gauze veil she coloured fiercely. If the housewife, in her primitive meaning and office, is vital to Canada, still more is the house-mother. 'Bear me sons and daughters; people my wastes!' seems to be the cry of the land itself. Deep in Elizabeth's being there stirred instincts and yearnings which life had so far stifled in her. She shivered as though some voice, passionate and yet austere, spoke to her from this great spectacle of mountain and water through which she was passing.

'There he is!' cried Philip, craning his head to look ahead along the train.

Anderson stood waiting for them on the Field platform. Very soon he was seated beside her, outside the car, while Philip lounged in the doorway, and Delaine inside, having done his duty to the Kicking Horse

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Pass, was devoting himself to a belated number of the *Athenæum* which had just reached him.

Philip had stored up a string of questions as to the hunting of goat in the Rockies, and impatiently produced them. Anderson replied, but, as Elizabeth immediately perceived, with a complete lack of his usual animation. He spoke with effort, occasionally stumbling over his words. She could not help looking at him curiously, and presently even Philip noticed something wrong.

'I say, Anderson! — what have you been doing to yourself? You look as though you had been knocking up.'

'I have been a bit driven this week,' said Anderson, with a start. 'Oh, nothing! You must look at this piece of line.'

And as they ran down the long ravine from Field to Golden, beside a river which all the way seems to threaten the gliding train by the savage force of its descent, he played the showman. The epic of the C.P.R. — no one knew it better, and no one could recite it more vividly than he.

So also, as they left the Rockies behind; as they sped along the Columbia between the Rockies to their right and the Selkirks to their left; or as they turned away from the Columbia, and, on the flanks of the Selkirks, began to mount that forest valley which leads to Rogers Pass, he talked freely and well, exerting himself to the utmost. The hopes and despairs, the endurances and ambitions of the first explorers who ever broke into that fierce solitude, he could reproduce them; for, though himself of a younger generation, yet by sym-

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pathy he had lived them. And if he had not been one of the builders of the line, in the incessant guardianship which preserves it from day to day, he had at one time played a prominent part, battling with Nature for it, summer and winter.

Delaine, at last, came out to listen. Philip, in the grip of his first hero-worship, lay silent and absorbed, watching the face and gestures of the speaker. Elizabeth sat with her eyes turned away from Anderson towards the wild valley, as they rose and rose above it. She listened; but her heart was full of new anxieties. What had happened to him? She felt him changed. He was talking purely for their pleasure, by a strong effort of will; that she realised. When could she get him alone? — her friend! — who was clearly in distress.

They approached the famous bridges on the long ascent. Yerkes came running through the car to point out with pride the place where the Grand Duchess had fainted beneath the terrors of the line. With only the railing of their little platform between them and the abyss, they ran over ravines hundreds of feet deep — the valley, a thousand feet sheer, below. And in that valley not a sign of house, of path; only black impenetrable forest — huge cedars and Douglas pines, filling up the bottoms, choking the river with their débris, climbing up the further sides, towards the gleaming line of peaks.

'It is a nightmare!' said Delaine involuntarily, looking round him.

Elizabeth laughed, a bright colour in her cheeks. Again the wildness ran through her blood, answering the challenge of Nature. Faint! — she was more in-

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clined to sing or shout. And with the exhilaration, physical and mental, that stole upon her, there mingled secretly, the first thrill of passion she had ever known. Anderson sat beside her, once more silent after his burst of talk. She was vividly conscious of him — of his bare curly head — of certain lines of fatigue and suffering in the bronzed face. And it was conveyed to her that, although he was clearly preoccupied and sad, he was yet conscious of her in the same way. Once as they were passing the highest bridge of all, where, carried on a great steel arch that has replaced the older trestles, the rails run naked and gleaming, without the smallest shred of wall or parapet, across a gash in the mountain up which they were creeping, and at a terrific height above the valley, Elizabeth, who was sitting with her back to the engine, bent suddenly to one side, leaning over the little railing and looking ahead — that she might if possible get a clearer sight of Mount Macdonald, the giant at whose feet lies Rogers Pass. Suddenly, as her weight pressed against the ironwork where only that morning a fastening had been mended, she felt a grip on her arm. She drew back, startled.

'I beg your pardon!' said Anderson, smiling, but a trifle paler than before. 'I'm not troubled with nerves for myself, but —'

He did not complete the sentence, and Elizabeth could find nothing to say.

'Why, Elizabeth's not afraid!' cried Philip, scornfully.

'This is Rogers Pass, and here we are at the top of the Selkirks,' said Anderson, rising. 'The train will

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wait here some twenty minutes. Perhaps you would like to walk about.'

They descended, all but Philip, who grumbled at the cold, wrapped himself in a rug inside the car, and summoned Yerkes to bring him a cup of coffee.

On this height indeed, and beneath the precipices of Mount Macdonald, which rise some five thousand feet perpendicularly above the railway, the air was chill and the clouds had gathered. On the right, ran a line of glacier-laden peaks, calling to their fellows across the pass. The ravine itself, darkly magnificent, made a gulf of shadow out of which rose glacier and snow slope, now veiled and now revealed by scudding cloud. Heavy rain had not long since fallen on the pass; the small stream, winding and looping through the narrow strip of desolate ground which marks the summit, roared in flood through the marshy growths of dank weed and stunted shrub; and the noise reverberated from the mountain walls, pressing straight and close on either hand.

'Hark!' cried Elizabeth, standing still, her face and her light dress beaten by the wind.

A sound which was neither thunder nor the voice of the stream rose and swelled and filled the pass. Another followed it. Anderson pointed to the snowy crags of Mount Macdonald, and there, leaping from ledge to ledge, they saw the summer avalanches descend, roaring as they came, till they sank engulfed in a vaporous whirl of snow.

Delaine tried to persuade Elizabeth to return to the car — in vain. He himself returned thither for a warmer coat, and she and Anderson walked on alone.

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'The Rockies were fine! — but the Selkirks are superb!'

She smiled at him as she spoke, as though she thanked him personally for the grandeur round them. Her slender form seemed to have increased in stature and in energy. The mountain rain was on her fresh cheek and her hair; a blue veil eddying round her head and face framed the brilliance of her eyes. Those who had known Elizabeth in Europe would hardly have recognised her here. The spirit of earth's wild and virgin places had mingled with her spirit, and as she had grown in sympathy, so also she had grown in beauty. Anderson looked at her from time to time in enchantment, grudging every minute that passed. The temptation strengthened to tell her his trouble. But how, or when?

As he turned to her he saw that she, too, was gazing at him with an anxious, wistful expression, her lips parted as though to speak.

He bent over her.

'What was that?' exclaimed Elizabeth, looking round her.

They had passed beyond the station where the train was at rest. But the sound of shouts pursued them. Anderson distinguished his own name. A couple of railway officials had left the station and were hurrying towards them.

A sudden thought struck Anderson. He held up his hand with a gesture as though to ask Lady Merton not to follow, and himself ran back to the station.

Elizabeth, from where she stood, saw the passengers all pouring out of the train on to the platform. Even

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The Great Illicilliwaet Glacier in British Columbia

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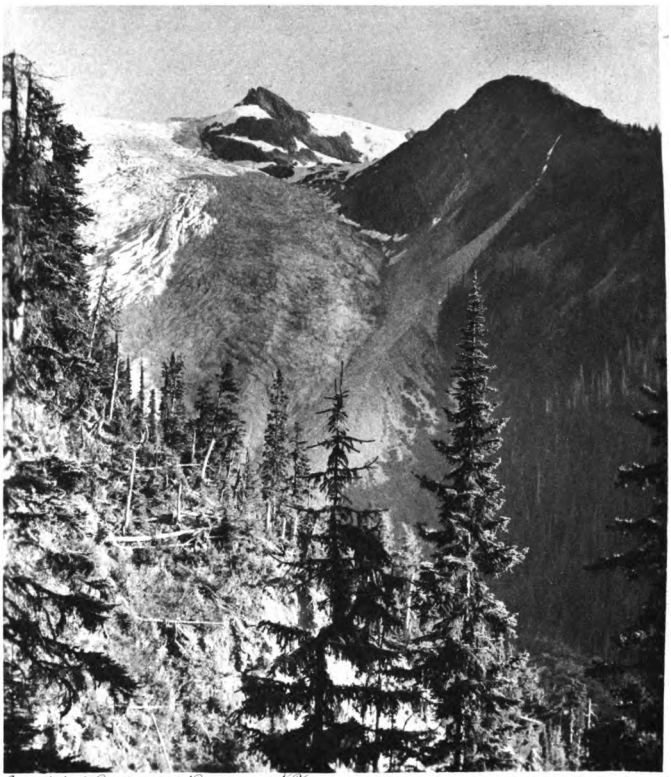

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Philip emerged and waved to her. She slowly returned, and meanwhile Anderson had disappeared.

She found an excited crowd of travellers and a babel of noise. Delaine hurried to her.

It appeared that an extraordinary thing had happened. The train immediately in front of them, carrying mail and express cars but no passengers, had been 'held-up' by a gang of train-robbers, at a spot between Sicamous junction and Kamloops. In order to break open the mail-van the robbers had employed a charge of dynamite, which had wrecked the car and caused some damage to the line; enough to block the permanent way for some hours.

'And Philip has just opened this telegram for you.'

Delaine handed it to her. It was from the District Superintendent, expressing great regret for the interruption to their journey, and suggesting that they should spend the night at the hotel at Glacier.

'Which I understand is only four miles off, the other side of the pass,' said Delaine. 'Was there ever anything more annoying!'

Elizabeth's face expressed an utter bewilderment.

'A train held up in Canada — and on the C.P.R. — impossible!'

An elderly man in front of her heard what she said, and turned upon her a face purple with wrath.

'You may well say that, madam! We are a law-abiding nation. We don't put up with the pranks they play in Montana. They say the scoundrels have got off. If we don't catch them, Canada's disgraced.'

'I say, Elizabeth,' cried Philip, pushing his way to her through the crowd, 'there's been a lot of shooting.

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There's some Mounted Police here, we picked up at Revelstoke, on their way to help catch these fellows. I've been talking to them. The police from Kamloops came upon them just as they were making off with a pretty pile — boxes full of money for some of the banks in Vancouver. The police fired, so did the robbers. One of the police was killed, and one of the thieves. Then the rest got off. I say, let's go and help hunt them!'

The boy's eyes danced with the joy of adventure.

'If they've any sense they'll send bloodhounds after them,' said the elderly man, fiercely. 'I helped catch a murderer with my own hands that way, last summer, near the Arrow Lakes.'

'Where is Mr. Anderson?'

The question escaped Elizabeth involuntarily. She had not meant to put it. But it was curious that he should have left them in the lurch at this particular moment.

'Take your seats!' cried the station-master, making his way through the crowded platform. 'This train goes as far as Sicamous junction only. Any passenger who wishes to break his journey will find accommodation at Glacier — next station.'

The English travellers were hurried back into their car. Still no sign of Anderson. Yerkes was only able to tell them that he had seen Anderson go into the station-master's private room with a couple of the mounted police. He might have come out again, or he might not. Yerkes had been too well occupied in exciting gossip with all his many acquaintances in the train and the station to notice.

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The conductor went along the train, shutting the doors. Yerkes standing on the inside platform called to him: —

'Have you seen Mr. Anderson?'

The man shook his head, but another standing by, evidently an official of some kind, looked round and ran up to the car.

'I'm sorry, madam,' he said, addressing Elizabeth, who was standing in the doorway, 'but Mr. Anderson is n't at liberty just now. He'll be travelling with the police.'

And as he spoke a door in the station building opened, and Anderson came out, accompanied by two constables of the mounted police and two or three officials. They walked hurriedly along the train and got into an empty compartment together. Immediately afterwards the train moved off.

'Well, I wonder what's up now!' said Philip in astonishment. 'Do you suppose Anderson 's got some clue to the men?'

Delaine looked uncomfortably at Elizabeth. As an old adviser and servant of the railway, extensively acquainted moreover with the population — settled or occasional — of the district, it was very natural that Anderson should be consulted on such an event. And yet — Delaine had caught a glimpse of his aspect on his way along the platform, and had noticed that he never looked towards the car. Some odd conjectures ran through his mind.

Elizabeth sat silent, looking back on the grim defile the train was just leaving. It was evident that they

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had passed the watershed, and the train was descending. In a few minutes they would be at Glacier.

She roused herself to hold a rapid consultation over plans.

They must of course do as they were advised, and spend the night at Glacier.

. . . . . .

The train drew up.

'Well, of all the nuisances!' — cried Philip, disgusted, as they prepared to leave the car.

Yerkes, like the showman that he was, began to descant volubly on the advantages and charms of the hotel, its Swiss guides, and the distinguished travellers who stayed there; dragging rugs and bags meanwhile out of the car. Nobody listened to him. Everybody in the little party, as they stood forlornly on the platform, was in truth searching for Anderson.

And at last he came — hurrying along towards them. His face, set, strained, and colourless, bore the stamp of calamity. But he gave them no time to question him.

'I am going on,' he said hastily to Elizabeth; 'they will look after you here. I will arrange everything for you as soon as possible, and if we don't meet before, perhaps — in Vancouver —'

'I say, are you going to hunt the robbers?' asked Philip, catching his arm.

Anderson made no reply. He turned to Delaine, drew him aside a moment, and put a letter into his hand.

'My father was one of them,' he said, without emo-

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tion, 'and is dead. I have asked you to tell Lady Merton.'

There was a call for him. The train was already moving. He jumped into it, and was gone.

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CHAPTER XII

THE station and hotel at Sicamous junction, overlooking the lovely Mara lake, were full of people — busy officials of different kinds, or excited onlookers — when Anderson reached them. The long summer day was just passing into a night that was rather twilight than darkness, and in the lower country the heat was great. Far away to the north stretched the wide and straggling waters of another and larger lake. Woods of poplar and cotton-wood grew along its swampy shore, and hills, forest clad, held it in a shallow cup flooded with the mingled light of sunset and moonlight.

Anderson was met by a District Superintendent, of the name of Dixon, as he descended from the train. The young man, with whom he was slightly acquainted, looked at him with excitement.

'This is a precious bad business! If you can throw any light upon it, Mr. Anderson, we shall be uncommonly obliged to you —'

Anderson interrupted him.

'Is the inquest to be held here?'

'Certainly. The bodies were brought in a few hours ago.'

His companion pointed to a shed beyond the station. They walked thither, the Superintendent describing in detail the attack on the train and the measures taken for the capture of the marauders, Anderson listening in silence. The affair had taken place early

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that morning, but the telegraph wires had been cut in several places on both sides of the damaged line, so that no precise news of what had happened had reached either Vancouver on the west, or Golden on the east, till the afternoon. The whole countryside was now in movement, and a vigorous manhunt was proceeding on both sides of the line.

'There is no doubt the whole thing was planned by a couple of men from Montana, one of whom was certainly concerned in the hold-up there a few months ago and got clean away. But there were six or seven of them altogether, and most of the rest — we suspect — from this side of the boundary. The old man who was killed' — Anderson raised his eyes abruptly to the speaker — 'seems to have come from Nevada. There were some cuttings from a Comstock newspaper found upon him, besides the envelope addressed to you, of which I sent you word at Rogers Pass. Could you recognise anything in my description of the man? There was one thing I forgot to say. He had evidently been in the doctor's hands lately. There is a surgical bandage on the right ankle.'

'Was there nothing in the envelope?' asked Anderson, putting the question aside, in spite of the evident eagerness of the questioner.

'Nothing.'

'And where is it?'

'It was given to the Kamloops coroner, who has just arrived.' Anderson said nothing more. They had reached the shed, which his companion unlocked. Inside were two rough tables on trestles and lying on them two sheeted forms.

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Dixon uncovered the first, and Anderson looked steadily down at the face beneath. Death had wrought its strange ironic miracle once more, and out of the face of an outcast had made the face of a sage. There was little disfigurement; the eyes were closed with dignity; the mouth seemed to have unlearnt its coarseness. Silently the tension of Anderson's inner being gave way; he was conscious of a passionate acceptance of the mere stillness and dumbness of death.

'Where was the wound?' he asked, stooping over the body.

'Ah, that was the strange thing! He did n't die of his wound at all! It was a mere graze on the arm.' The Superintendent pointed to a rent on the coat-sleeve. 'He died of something quite different — perhaps excitement and a weak heart. There may have to be a post-mortem.'

'I doubt whether that will be necessary,' said Anderson.

The other looked at him with undisguised curiosity.

'Then you do recognise him?'

'I will tell the coroner what I know.'

Anderson drew back from his close examination of the dead face, and began in his turn to question the Superintendent. Was it certain that this man had been himself concerned in the hold-up and in the struggle with the police?

Dixon did not see how there could be any doubt of it. The constables who had rushed in upon the gang while they were still looting the express car — the brakesman having managed to get away and convey the alarm to Kamloops — remembered seeing an old man with

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white hair, apparently lame, at the rear of the more active thieves, and posted as a sentinel. He had been the first to give warning of the police approach, and had levelled his revolver at the foremost constable, but had missed his shot. In the free firing which had followed nobody exactly knew what had happened. One of the attacking force, Constable Brown, had fallen, and while his comrades were attempting to save him, the thieves had dropped down the steep bank of the river close by, into a boat waiting for them, and got off. The constable was left dead upon the ground, and not far from him lay the old man, also lifeless. But when they came to examine the bodies, while the constable was shot through the head, the other had received nothing but the trifling wound Dixon had already pointed out.

Anderson listened to the story in silence. Then with a last long look at the rigid features below him, he replaced the covering. Passing on to the other table, he raised the sheet from the face of a splendid young Englishman, whom he had last seen the week before at Regina: an English public-school boy of the manliest type, full of hope for himself, and of enthusiasm, both for Canada and for the fine body of men in which he had been just promoted. For the first time a stifled groan escaped from Anderson's lips. What hand had done this murder?

They left the shed. Anderson inquired what doctor had been sent for. He recognised the name given as that of a Kamloops man whom he knew and respected; and he went on to look for him at the hotel.

For some time he and the doctor paced a trail be-

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side the line together. Among other facts that Anderson got from this conversation, he learnt that the police of Nevada had been telegraphed to, and that a couple of constables from there were coming to assist the Canadian police. They were expected the following morning, when also the coroner's inquest would be held.

As to Anderson's own share in the interview, when the two men parted, with a silent grasp of the hand, the doctor had nothing to say to the bystanders, except that Mr. Anderson would have some evidence to give on the morrow, and that, for himself, he was not at liberty to divulge what had passed between them.

It was by this time late. Anderson shut himself up in his room at the hotel; but among the groups lounging at the bar or in the neighbourhood of the station excitement and discussion ran high. The envelope addressed to Anderson, Anderson's own demeanour since his arrival on the scene — with the meaning of both conjecture was busy.

Towards midnight a train arrived from Field. A messenger from the station knocked at Anderson's door with a train letter. Anderson locked the door again behind the man who had brought it, and stood looking at it a moment in silence. It was from Lady Merton. He opened it slowly, took it to the small deal table, which held a paraffin lamp, and sat down to read it.

DEAR MR. ANDERSON, — Mr. Delaine has given me your message and read me some of your letter to him. He has also told me what he knew before this

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happened — we understood that you wished it. Oh! I cannot say how sorry we are, Philip and I, for your great trouble. It makes me sore at heart to think that all the time you have been looking after us so kindly, taking this infinite pains for us, you have had this heavy anxiety on your mind. Oh! why did n't you tell me? I thought we were to be friends. And now this tragedy! It is terrible — terrible! Your father has been his own worst enemy — and at last death has come — and he has escaped himself. Is there not some comfort in that? And you tried to save him. I can imagine all that you have been doing and planning for him. It is not lost, dear Mr. Anderson. No love and pity are ever lost. They are undying — for they are God's life in us. They are the pledge — the sign — to which He is eternally bound. He will surely, surely redeem — and fulfil.

I write incoherently, for they are waiting for my letter. I want you to write to me, if you will. And when will you come back to us? We shall, I think, be two or three days here, for Philip has made friends with a man we have met here — a surveyor, who has been camping high up, and shooting wild goat. He is determined to go for an expedition with him, and I have had to telegraph to the Lieutenant-Governor to ask him not to expect us till Thursday. So if you were to come back here before then you would still find us. I don't know that I could be of any use to you, or any consolation to you. But, indeed, I would try.

To-morrow I am told will be the inquest. My thoughts will be with you constantly. By now you will have determined on your line of action. I only

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know that it will be noble and upright — like yourself.

I remain, yours most sincerely,
ELIZABETH MERTON.

Anderson pressed the letter to his lips. Its tender philosophising found no echo in his own mind. But it soothed, because it came from her.

He lay dressed and wakeful on his bed through the night, and at nine next morning the inquest opened, in the coffee-room of the hotel.

The body of the young constable was first identified. As to the hand which had fired the shot that killed him, there was no certain evidence; one of the police had seen the lame man with the white hair level his revolver again after the first miss; but there was much shooting going on, and no one could be sure from what quarter the fatal bullet had come.

The court then proceeded to the identification of the dead robber. The coroner, a rancher who bred the best horses in the district, called first upon two strangers in plain clothes, who had arrived by the first train from the South that morning. They proved to be the two constables from Nevada. They had already examined the body, and they gave clear and unhesitating evidence, identifying the old man as one Alexander McEwen, well known to the police of the silver-mining State as a lawless and dangerous character. He had been twice in jail, and had been the associate of the notorious Bill Symonds in one or two criminal affairs connected with 'faked' claims and the like. The elder of the two constables in particular drew a vivid and

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damning picture of the man's life and personality, of the cunning with which he had evaded the law, and the ruthlessness with which he had avenged one or two private grudges.

'We have reason to suppose,' said the American officer finally, 'that McEwen was not originally a native of the States. We believe that he came from Dawson City or the neighbourhood about ten years ago, and that he crossed the border in consequence of a mysterious affair — which has never been cleared up — in which a rich German gentleman, Baron von Aeschenbach, disappeared, and has not been heard of since. Of that, however, we have no proof, and we cannot supply the court with any information as to the man's real origin and early history. But we are prepared to swear that the body we have seen this morning is that of Alexander McEwen, who for some years past has been well known to us, now in one camp, now in another, of the Comstock district.'

The American police officer resumed his seat. George Anderson, who was to the right of the coroner, had sat, all through this witness's evidence, bending forward, his eyes on the ground, his hands clasped between his knees. There was something in the rigidity of his attitude which gradually compelled the attention of the onlookers, as though the perception gained ground that here — in that stillness — those bowed shoulders — lay the real interest of this sordid outrage, which had so affronted the pride of Canada's great railway.

The coroner rose. He briefly expressed the thanks of the court to the Nevada State authorities for having

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so promptly supplied the information in their possession with regard to this man McEwen. He would now ask Mr. George Anderson, of the C.P.R., whether he could in any way assist the court in this investigation. An empty envelope, fully addressed to Mr. George Anderson, Ginnell's Boarding House, Laggan, Alberta, had, strangely enough, been found in McEwen's pocket. Could Mr. Anderson throw any light upon the matter?

Anderson stood up as the coroner handed him the envelope. He took it, looked at it, and slowly put it down on the table before him. He was perfectly composed, but there was that in his aspect which instantly hushed all sounds in the crowded room, and drew the eyes of everybody in it upon him. The Kamloops doctor looked at him from a distance with a sudden twitching smile — the smile of a reticent man in whom strong feeling must somehow find a physical expression. Dixon, the young Superintendent, bent forward eagerly. At the back of the room a group of Japanese railway workers with their round, yellow faces and half-opened eyes, stared impassively at the tall figure of the fair-haired Canadian; and through windows and doors, thrown open to the heat, shimmered lake and forest, the eternal background of Canada.

'Mr. Coroner,' said Anderson, straightening himself to his full height, 'the name of the man into whose death you are inquiring is not Alexander McEwen. He came from Scotland to Manitoba in 1869. His real name was Robert Anderson, and I — am his son.'

The coroner gave an involuntary 'Ah!' of amazement, which was echoed, it seemed, throughout the room.

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On one of the small deal tables belonging to the coffee-room, which had been pushed aside to make room for the sitting of the court, lay the newspapers of the morning — the *Vancouver Sentinel* and the *Montreal Star*. Both contained short and flattering articles on the important commission entrusted to Mr. George Anderson by the Prime Minister. 'A great compliment to so young a man,' said the *Star*, 'but one amply deserved by Mr. Anderson's record. We look forward on his behalf to a brilliant career, honourable both to himself and to Canada.'

Several persons had already knocked at Anderson's door early that morning in order to congratulate him; but without finding him. And this honoured and fortunate person —?

Men pushed each other forward in their eagerness not to lose a word, or a shade of expression on the pale face which confronted them.

Anderson, after a short pause, as though to collect himself, gave the outlines of his father's early history, of the farm in Manitoba, the fire and its consequences, the breach between Robert Anderson and his sons. He described the struggle of the three boys on the farm, their migration to Montreal in search of education, and his own later sojourn in the Yukon, with the evidence which had convinced him of his father's death.

'Then, only a fortnight ago, he appeared at Laggan and made himself known to me, having followed me apparently from Winnipeg. He seemed to be in great poverty, and in bad health. If he had wished it, I was prepared to acknowledge him; but he seemed not to wish it; there were no doubt reasons why he preferred

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to keep his assumed name. I did what I could for him, and arrangements had been made to put him with decent people at Vancouver. But last Wednesday night he disappeared from the boarding-house where he and I were both lodging, and various persons here will know' — he glanced at one or two faces in the ring before him — 'that I have been making inquiries since, with no result. As to what or who led him into this horrible buisness, I know nothing. The Nevada police have told you that he was acquainted with Symonds — a fact unknown to me — and I noticed on one or two occasions that he seemed to have acquaintances among the men tramping west to the Kootenay district. I can only imagine that after his success in Montana last year, Symonds made up his mind to try the same game on the C.P.R., and that during the last fortnight he came somehow into communication with my father. My father must have been aware of Symonds's plans — and may have been unable at the last to resist the temptation to join in the scheme. As to all that I am entirely in the dark.'

He paused, and then, looking down, he added, under his breath, as though involuntarily —

'I pray — that he may not have been concerned in the murder of poor Brown. But there is — I think — no evidence to connect him with it. I shall be glad to answer to the best of my power any questions that the court may wish to put.'

He sat down heavily, very pale, but entirely collected. The room watched him a moment, and then a friendly, encouraging murmur seemed to rise from the crowd — to pass from them to Anderson.

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The coroner, who was an old friend of Anderson's, fidgeted a little and in silence. He took off his glasses and put them on again. His tanned face, long and slightly twisted, with square harsh brows, and powerful jaw set in a white fringe of whisker, showed an unusual amount of disturbance. At last he said, clearing his throat: 'We are much obliged to you, Mr. Anderson, for your frankness towards this court. There's not a man here that don't feel for you, and don't wish to offer you his respectful sympathy. We know you — and I reckon we know what to think about you. Gentlemen'— he spoke with nasal deliberation, looking round the court — 'I think that's so?'

A shout of consent — the shout of men deeply moved — went up. Anderson, who had resumed his former attitude, appeared to take no notice, and the coroner resumed: —

'I will now call on Mrs. Ginnell to give her evidence.'

The Irishwoman rose with alacrity; and what she had to say held the audience. The surly yet good-hearted creature was divided between her wish to do justice to the demerits of McEwen, whom she had detested, and her fear of hurting Anderson's feelings in public. Beneath her rough exterior, she carried some of the delicacies of Celtic feeling, and she had no sooner given some fact that showed the coarse dishonesty of the father, than she veered off in haste to describe the pathetic efforts of the son. Her homely talk told; the picture grew.

Meanwhile Anderson sat impatient or benumbed, annoyed with Mrs. Ginnell's garrulity, and longing for

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the whole thing to end. He had a letter to write to Ottawa before post-time.

When the verdicts had been given, the doctor and he walked away from the court together. The necessary formalities were carried through, a coffin ordered, and provision made for the burial of Robert Anderson. As the two men passed once or twice through the groups now lounging and smoking as before outside the hotel, all conversation ceased, and all eyes followed Anderson. Sincere pity was felt for him; and at the same time men asked each other anxiously how the revelation would affect his political and other chances.

Late in the same evening the burial of McEwen took place. A congregational minister at the graveside said a prayer for mercy on the sinner. Anderson had not asked him to do it, and felt a dull resentment of the man's officiousness, and the unctuous length of his prayer. Half an hour later he was on the platform, waiting for the train to Glacier.

He arrived there in the first glorious dawn of a summer morning. Over the vast Illecillewaet glacier rosy feather-clouds were floating in a crystal air, beneath a dome of pale blue. Light mists rose from the forests and the course of the river, and above them shone the dazzling snows, the hanging glaciers, and glistening rock faces, ledge piled on ledge, of the Selkirk giants — Hermit and Tupper, Avalanche and Sir Donald — with that cleft of the pass between.

The pleasant hotel, built to offer as much shelter and comfort as possible to the tired traveller and climber, was scarcely awake. A sleepy-eyed Japanese showed

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Anderson to his room. He threw himself on the bed, longing for sleep, yet incapable of it. He was once more under the same roof with Elizabeth Merton — and for the last time! He longed for her presence, her look, her touch; and yet with equal intensity he shrank from seeing her. That very morning through the length and breadth of Canada and the States would go out the news of the train-robbery on the main line of the C.P.R., and with it the 'dramatic' story of himself and his father, made more dramatic by a score of reporters. And as the news of his appointment, in the papers of the day before, had made him a public person, and had been no doubt telegraphed to London and Europe, so also would it be with the news of the 'hold-up,' and of his own connexion with it; partly because it had happened on the C.P.R.; still more because of the prominence given to his name the day before.

He felt himself a disgraced man; and he had already put from him all thought of a public career. Yet he wondered, not without self-contempt, as he lay there in the broadening light, what it was in truth that made the enormous difference between this Monday and the Monday before. His father was dead, and had died in the very commission of a criminal act. But all or nearly all that Anderson knew now about his character he had known before this happened. The details given by the Nevada police were indeed new to him; but he had shrewdly suspected all along that the record, did he know it, would be something like that. If such a parentage in itself involves stain and degradation, the stain and degradation had been always there, and the situation, looked at philosophically, was no

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worse for the catastrophe which had intervened between this week and last.

And yet it was of course immeasurably worse! Such is the 'bubble reputation' — the difference between the known and the unknown.

At nine o'clock a note was brought to his room.

'Will you breakfast with me in half an hour? You will find me alone. — E. M.'

Before the clock struck the half-hour, Elizabeth was already waiting for her guest, listening for every sound. She too had been awake half the night.

When he came in she went up to him, with her quick tripping step, holding out both her hands; and he saw that her eyes were full of tears.

'I am so — so sorry!' was all she could say. He looked into her eyes, and as her hands lay in his he stooped suddenly and kissed them. There was a great piteousness in his expression, and she felt through every nerve the humiliation and the moral weariness which oppressed him. Suddenly! she recalled that first moment of intimacy between them when he had so brusquely warned her about Philip, and she had been wounded by his mere strength and fearlessness; and it hurt her to realise the contrast between that strength and this weakness.

She made him sit down beside her in the broad window of her little sitting-room, which overlooked the winding valley with the famous loops of the descending railway, and the moving light and shade on the forest; and very gently and tenderly she made him tell her all the story from first to last.

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His shrinking passed away, soothed by her sweetness, her restrained emotion, and after a little he talked with freedom, gradually recovering his normal steadiness and clearness of mind.

At the same time she perceived some great change in him. The hidden spring of melancholy in his nature, which, amid all his practical energies and activities, she had always discerned, seemed to have overleaped its barriers, and to be invading the landmarks of character.

At the end of his narrative he said something in a hurried, low voice which gave her a clue.

'I did what I could to help him — but my father hated me. He died hating me. Nothing I could do altered him. Had he reason? When my brother and I in our anger thought we were avenging our mother's death, were we in truth destroying him also — driving him into wickedness, beyond hope? Were we — was I — for I was the eldest — responsible? Does his death, moral and physical, lie at my door?'

He raised his eyes to her — his tired appealing eyes — and Elizabeth realised sharply how deep a hold such questionings take on such a man. She tried to argue with and comfort him — and he seemed to absorb, to listen — but in the middle of it, he said abruptly, as though to change the subject: —

'And I confess the publicity has hit me hard. It may be cowardly, but I can't face it for a while. I think I told you I owned some land in Saskatchewan. I shall go and settle down on it at once.'

'And give up your appointment — your public life?' she cried in dismay.

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He smiled at her faintly, as though trying to console her.

'Yes; I shan't be missed, and I shall do better by myself. I understand the wheat and land. They are friends that don't fail one.'

Elizabeth flushed.

'Mr. Anderson! — you must n't give up your work. Canada asks it of you.'

'I shall only be changing my work. A man can do nothing better for Canada than break up land.'

'You can do that — and other things besides. Please — please — do nothing rash!'

She bent over to him, her brown eyes full of entreaty, her hand laid gently, timidly on his.

He could not bear to distress her — but he must.

'I sent in my resignation yesterday to the Prime Minister.'

The delicate face beside him clouded.

'He won't accept it.'

Anderson shook his head. 'I think he must.'

Elizabeth looked at him in despair.

'Oh! no. You ought n't to do this — indeed, indeed you ought n't! It is cowardly — forgive me! — unworthy of you. Oh! can't you see how the sympathy of everybody who knows — everybody whose opinion you care for —'

She stopped a moment, colouring deeply, checked indeed by the thought of a conversation between herself and Philip of the night before. Anderson interrupted her: —

'The sympathy of one person,' he said hoarsely, 'is very precious to me. But even for her —'

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She held out her hands to him again imploringly—'Even for her? —'

But instead of taking the hands he rose and went out on the balcony a moment, as though to look at the great view. Then he returned, and stood over her.

'Lady Merton, I am afraid — it's no use. We are not — we can't be — friends.'

'Not friends?' she said, her lip quivering. 'I thought I —'

He looked down steadily on her upturned face. His own spoke eloquently enough. Turning her head away, with fluttering breath, she began to speak fast and brokenly: —

'I, too, have been very lonely. I want a friend whom I might help — who would help me. Why should you refuse? We are not either of us quite young; what we undertook we could carry through. Since my husband's death I — I have been playing at life. I have always been hungry, dissatisfied, discontented. There were such splendid things going on in the world, and I — I was just marking time. Nothing to do! — as much money as I could possibly want — society of course — travelling — and visiting — and amusing myself — but oh! so tired all the time. And somehow Canada has been a revelation of real, strong, living things — this great North-West — and you, who seemed to explain it to me —'

'Dear Lady Merton!' His tone was low and full of emotion. And this time it was he who stooped and took her unresisting hands in his. She went on in the same soft, pleading tone —

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'I felt what it might be — to help in the building up a better human life — in this vast new country. God has given to you this task — such a noble task! — and through your friendship, I too seemed to have a little part in it, if only by sympathy. Oh, no! you must n't turn back — you must n't shrink — because of what has happened to you. And let me, from a distance, watch and help. It will ennoble my life too. Let me!' — she smiled — 'I shall make a good friend, you'll see. I shall write very often. I shall argue — and criticise — and want a great deal of explaining. And you'll come over to us, and do splendid work, and make many English friends. Your strength will all come back to you.'

He pressed the hands he held more closely.

'It is like you to say all this — but — don't let us deceive ourselves. I could not be your friend, Lady Merton. I must not come and see you.'

She was silent, very pale, her eyes on his — and he went on: —

'It is strange to say it in this way, at such a moment; but it seems as though I had better say it. I have had the audacity, you see — to fall in love with you. And if it was audacity a week ago, you can guess what it is now — now when — Ask your mother and brother what they would think of it!' he said abruptly, almost fiercely.

There was a moment's silence. All consciousness, all feeling in each of these two human beings had come to be — with the irrevocable swiftness of love — a consciousness of the other. Under the sombre renouncing passion of his look, her own eyes filled

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slowly — beautifully — with tears. And through all his perplexity and pain there shot a thrill of joy, of triumph even, sharp and wonderful. He understood. All this might have been his — this delicate beauty, this quick will, this rare intelligence. And yet the surrender in her aspect was not the simple surrender of love; he knew before she spoke that she did not pretend to ignore the obstacles between them; that she was not going to throw herself upon his renunciation, trying vehemently to break it down, in a mere blind girlish impulsiveness. He realised at once her heart, and her common sense; and was grateful to her for both.

Gently she drew herself away, drawing a long breath. 'My mother and brother would not decide those things for me — oh, *never!* — I should decide them for myself. But we are not going to talk of them to-day. We are not going to make any — any rash promises to each other. It is you we must think for — your future — your life. And then — if you won't give me a friend's right to speak — you will be unkind — and I shall respect you less.'

She threw back her little head with vivacity. In the gesture he saw the strength of her will and his own wavered.

'How can it be unkind?' he protested. 'You ought not to be troubled with me any more.'

'Let me be the judge of that. If you will persist in giving up this appointment, promise me at least to come to England. That will break the spell of this — this terrible thing, and give you courage — again. Promise me!'

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'No, no! — you are too good to me — too good; — let it end here. It is much, much better so.'

Then she broke down a little.

She looked round her, like some hurt creature seeking a means of escape. Her lips trembled. She gave a low cry. 'And I have loved Canada so! I have been so happy here.'

'And now I have hurt you? — I have spoilt everything?'

'It is your unhappiness does that — and that you will spoil your life. Promise me only this one thing — to come to England! Promise me!'

He sat down in a quiet despair that she would urge him so. A long argument followed between them, and at last she wore him down. She dared say nothing more of the Commissionership; but he promised her to come to England some time in the following winter; and with that she had to be content.

Then she gave him breakfast. During their conversation, which Elizabeth guided as far as possible to indifferent topics, the name of Mariette was mentioned. He was still, it seemed, at Vancouver. Elizabeth gave Anderson a sudden look, and casually, without his noticing, she possessed herself of the name of Mariette's hotel.

At breakfast also she described, with a smile and sigh, her brother's first and last attempt to shoot wild goat in the Rockies, an expedition which had ended in a wetting and a chill — 'luckily nothing much; but poor Philip won't be out of his room to-day.'

'I will go and see him,' said Anderson, rising.

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Elizabeth looked up, her colour fluttering.

'Mr. Anderson, Philip is only a boy, and sometimes a foolish boy —'

'I understand,' said Anderson quietly, after a moment, 'Philip thinks his sister has been running risks. Who warned him?'

Elizabeth shrugged her shoulders without replying. He saw a touch of scorn in her face that was new to him.

'I think I guess,' he said. 'Why not? It was the natural thing. So Mr. Delaine is still here?'

'Till to-morrow.'

'I am glad. I shall like to assure him that his name was not mentioned — he was not involved at all!'

Elizabeth's lip curled a little, but she said nothing. During the preceding forty-eight hours there had been passages between herself and Delaine that she did not intend Anderson to know anything about. In his finical repugnance to soiling his hands with matters so distasteful, Delaine had carried out the embassy which Anderson had perforce entrusted to him in such a manner as to rouse in Elizabeth a maximum of pride on her own account, and of indignation on Anderson's. She was not even sorry for him any more; being, of course, therein a little unjust to him, as was natural to a high-spirited and warm-hearted woman.

Anderson, meanwhile, went off to knock at Philip's door, and Philip's sister was left behind to wonder nervously how Philip would behave and what he would say. She was still smarting under the boy's furious outburst of the night before when, through a calculated indiscretion of Delaine's, the notion that An-

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derson had presumed and might still presume to set his ambitions on Elizabeth had been presented to him for the first time.

'My sister marry a mining engineer! — with a drunken old robber for a father! By Jove! Anybody talking nonsense of that kind will jolly well have to reckon with me! Elizabeth! — you may say what you like but I am the head of the family!'

. . . . . .

Anderson found the head of the family in bed, surrounded by novels, and a dozen books on big game shooting in the Rockies. Philip received him with an evident and ungracious embarrassment.

'I am awfully sorry — beastly business. Hard lines on you, of course — very. Hope they'll get the men.'

'Thank you. They are doing their best.'

Anderson sat down beside the lad. The fragility of his look struck him painfully, and the pathetic contrast between it and the fretting spirit — the books of travel and adventure heaped round him.

'Have you been ill again?' he asked in his kind, deep voice.

'Oh, just a beastly chill. Elizabeth would make me take too many wraps. Everyone knows you ought n't to get overheated walking.'

'Do you want to stay on here longer?'

'Not I! What do I care about glaciers and mountains and that sort of stuff if I can't hunt? But Elizabeth's got at the doctor somehow, and he won't let me go for three or four days unless I kick over the traces. I daresay I shall.'

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'No you won't — for your sister's sake. I 'll see all arrangements are made.'

Philip made no direct reply. He lay staring at the ceiling — till at last he said —

'Delaine's going. He's going to-morrow. He gets on Elizabeth's nerves.'

'Did he say anything to you about me?' said Anderson.

Philip flushed.

'Well, I daresay he did.'

'Make your mind easy, Gaddesden. A man with my story is not going to ask your sister to marry him.'

Philip looked up. Anderson sat composedly erect, the traces of his nights of sleeplessness and revolt marked on every feature, but as much master of himself and his life — so Gaddesden intuitively felt — as he had ever been. A movement of remorse and affection stirred in the young man mingled with the strength of other inherited things.

'Awfully sorry, you know,' he said clumsily, but this time sincerely. 'I don't suppose it makes any difference to you that your father — well, I 'd better not talk about it. But you see — Elizabeth might marry anybody. She might have married heaps of times since Merton died, if she had n't been such an icicle. She 's got lots of money, and — well, I don't want to be snobbish — but at home — we — our family —'

'I understand,' said Anderson, perhaps a little impatiently, 'you are great people. I understood that all along.'

Family pride cried out in Philip. 'Then why the deuce —' But he said aloud in some confusion, 'I

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suppose that sounded disgusting' — then floundering deeper — 'but you see — well, I 'm very fond of Elizabeth!'

Anderson rose and walked to the window which commanded a view of the railway line.

'I see the car outside. I 'll go and have a few words with Yerkes.'

The boy let him go in silence — conscious on the one hand that he had himself played a mean part in their conversation, and on the other that Anderson, under this onset of sordid misfortune, was somehow more of a hero in his eyes, and no doubt in other people's, than ever.

. . . . . .

On his way downstairs Anderson ran into Delaine, who was ascending with an armful of books and pamphlets.

'Oh, how do you do? Had only just heard you were here. May I have a word with you?'

Anderson remounted the stairs in silence, and the two men paused, seeing no one in sight, in the corridor beyond.

'I have just read the report of the inquest, and should like to offer you my sincere sympathy and congratulations on your very straightforward behaviour —' Anderson made a movement. Delaine went on hurriedly —

'I should like also to thank you for having kept my name out of it.'

'There was no need to bring it in,' said Anderson coldly.

'No, of course not — of course not! I have also seen

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the news of your appointment. I trust nothing will interfere with that.'

Anderson turned towards the stairs again. He was conscious of a keen antipathy — the antipathy of tired nerves — to the speaker's mere aspect, his long hair, his too picturesque dress, the antique gem on his little finger, the effeminate stammer in his voice.

'Are you going to-day? What train?' he said, in a careless voice as he moved away.

Delaine drew back, made a curt reply, and the two men parted.

'Oh, he'll get over it; there will very likely be nothing to get over!' Delaine reflected tartly, as he made his way to his room. 'A new country like this can't be too particular.' He was thankful, at any rate, that he would have an opportunity before long — for he was going straight home and to Cumberland — of putting Mrs. Gaddesden on her guard. 'I may be thought officious; Lady Merton let me see very plainly that she thinks me so — but I shall do my duty nevertheless.'

And as he stood over his packing, bewildering his valet with a number of precise and old-maidish directions, his sore mind ran alternately on the fiasco of his own journey and on the incredible folly of nice women.

. . . . . .

Delaine departed; and for two days Elizabeth administered to Anderson. She herself went strangely through it, feeling between them, as it were, the bared sword of his ascetic will — no less than her own terrors and hesitations. But she set herself to lift him from the depths; and as they walked about the mountains and the forests, in a glory of summer sunshine, the sanity

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and sweetness of her nature made for him a spiritual atmosphere akin in its healing power to the influence of pine and glacier upon his physical weariness.

On the second evening, Mariette walked into the hotel. Anderson, who had just concluded all arrangements for the departure of the car with its party within forty-eight hours, received him with astonishment.

'What brings you here?'

Mariette's harsh face smiled at him gravely.

'The conviction that if I did n't come you would be committing a folly.'

'What do you mean?'

'Giving up your Commissionership, or some nonsense of that sort.'

'I have given it up.'

'H'm! Anything from Ottawa yet?'

It was impossible, Anderson pointed out, that there should be any letter for another three days. But he had written finally and did not mean to be over-persuaded.

Mariette at once carried him off for a walk and attacked him vigorously. 'Your private affairs have nothing whatever to do with your public work. Canada wants you — you must go.'

'Canada can easily get hold of a Commissioner who would do her more credit,' was the bitter reply. 'A man's personal circumstances are part of his equipment. They must not be such as to injure his mission.'

Mariette argued in vain.

As they were both dining in the evening with Elizabeth and Philip, a telegram was brought in for Ander-

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son from the Prime Minister. It contained a peremptory and flattering refusal to accept his resignation.

'Nothing has occurred which affects your public or private character. My confidence quite unchanged. Work is best for yourself, and the public expects it of you. Take time to consider, and wire me in two days.'

Anderson thrust it into his pocket, and was only with difficulty persuaded to show it to Mariette.

But in the course of the evening many letters arrived — letters of sympathy from old friends in Quebec and Manitoba, from colleagues and officials, from his navvies and railwaymen even, on the C.P.R., from future constitutents in Saskatchewan — drawn out by the newspaper reports of the inquest and of Anderson's evidence. For once the world rallied to a good man in distress! and Anderson was strangely touched and overwhelmed by it.

He passed an almost sleepless night, and in the morning as he met Elizabeth on her balcony he said to her, half reproachfully, pointing to Mariette below —

'It was you sent for him.'

Elizabeth smiled.

'A woman knows her limitations! It is harder to refuse two than one.'

For twenty-four hours the issue remained uncertain. Letters continued to pour in; Mariette applied the plain-spoken, half-scornful arguments natural to a man holding a purely spiritual standard of life; and Elizabeth pleaded more by look and manner than by words.

Anderson held out as long as he could. He was assaulted by that dark midway hour of manhood, that

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distrust of life and his own powers, which disables so many of the world's best men in these heightened, hurrying days. But in the end his two friends saved him — as by fire.

Mariette himself dictated the telegram to the Prime Minister in which Anderson withdrew his resignation; and then, while Anderson, with a fallen countenance, carried it to the post, the French Canadian and Elizabeth looked at each other — in a common exhaustion and relief.

'I feel a wreck,' said Elizabeth. 'Monsieur, you are an excellent ally.' And she held out her hand to her colleague. Mariette took it, and bowed over it with the air of a *grand seigneur* of 1680.

'The next step must be yours, Madame, — if you really take an interest in our friend.'

Elizabeth rather nervously inquired what it might be.

'Find him a wife! — a good wife. He was not made to live alone.'

His penetrating eyes in his ugly well-bred face searched the features of his companion. Elizabeth bore it smiling, without flinching.

A fortnight passed — and Elizabeth and Philip were on their way home through the heat of July. Once more the railway which had become their kind familiar friend sped them through the prairies, already whitening to the harvest, through the Ontarian forests and the Ottawa valley. The wheat was standing thick on the illimitable earth; the plains in their green or golden dress seemed to laugh and sing under the hot dome of

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sky. Again the great Canadian spectacle unrolled itself from west to east, and the heart Elizabeth brought to it was no longer the heart of a stranger. The teeming Canadian life had become deeply interwoven with her life; and when Anderson came to bid her a hurried farewell on the platform at Regina, she carried the passionate memory of his face with her, as the embodiment and symbol of all that she had seen and felt.

Then her thoughts turned to England, and the struggle before her. She braced herself against the Old World as against an enemy. But her spirit failed her when she remembered that in Anderson himself she was like to find her chiefest foe.

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CHAPTER XIII

'WHAT about the shooters, Wilson? I suppose they'll be in directly?'

'They're just finishing the last beat, ma'am. Shall I bring in tea?'

Mrs. Gaddesden assented, and then leaving her seat by the fire she moved to the window to see if she could discover any signs in the wintry landscape outside of Philip and his shooting party. As she did so she heard the rattle of distant shots coming from a point to her right beyond the girdling trees of the garden. But she saw none of the shooters — only two persons, walking up and down the stone terrace outside, in the glow of the November sunset. One was Elizabeth, the other, a tall ungainly, yet remarkable figure, was a Canadian friend of Elizabeth's who had only arrived that forenoon — M. Félix Mariette, of Quebec. According to Elizabeth, he had come over to attend a Catholic congress in London. Mrs. Gaddesden understood that he was an Ultramontane, and that she was not to mention to him the word 'Empire.' She knew also that Elizabeth had made arrangements with a neighbouring landowner, who was a Catholic, that he should be motored fifteen miles to Mass on the following morning, which was Sunday; and her own easy-going Anglican temper, which carried her to the parish church about twelve times a year, had been thereby a good deal impressed.

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How well those furs became Elizabeth! It was a chill frosty evening, and Elizabeth's slight form was wrapped in the sables which had been one of poor Merton's earliest gifts to her. The mother's eye dwelt with an habitual pride on the daughter's grace of movement and carriage. 'She is always so distinguished,' she thought, and then checked herself by the remembrance that she was applying to Elizabeth an adjective that Elizabeth particularly disliked. Nevertheless Mrs. Gaddesden knew very well what she herself meant by it. She meant something — some quality in Elizabeth — which was always provoking in her mother's mind despairing comparisons between what she was actually making, or threatening to make of it.

Alas, for that Canadian journey! — that disastrous Canadian journey! Mrs. Gaddesden's thoughts, as she watched the two strollers outside, were carried back to the moment in early August when Arthur Delaine had reappeared in her drawing-room, three weeks before Elizabeth's return, and she had gathered from his cautious and stammering revelations what kind of man it was who seemed to have established this strange hold on her daughter. Delaine, she thought, had spoken most generously of Elizabeth and his own disappointment, and most kindly of this Mr. Anderson.

'I know nothing against him personally — nothing! No doubt a very estimable young fellow, with just the kind of ability that will help him in Canada. Lady Merton, I imagine, will have told you of the sad events in which we found him involved?'

Mrs. Gaddesden had replied that certainly Elizabeth

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had told her the whole story, so far as it concerned Mr. Anderson. She pointed to the letters beside her.

'But you cannot suppose,' had been her further indignant remark, 'that Elizabeth would ever dream of marrying him!'

'That, my dear old friend, is for her mother to find out,' Delaine had replied, not without a touch of venom. 'I can certainly assure you that Lady Merton is deeply interested in this young man, and he in her.'

'Elizabeth — exiling herself to Canada! — burying herself on the prairies! — when she might have everything here — the best of everything — at her feet. It is inconceivable!'

Delaine had agreed that it was inconceivable, and they had mourned together over the grotesque possibilities of life. 'But you will save her,' he had said at last. 'You will save her! You will point out to her all she would be giving up — the absurdity, the really criminal waste of it!'

On which he had gloomily taken his departure for an archæological congress at Berlin, and an autumn in Italy; and a few weeks later she had recovered her darling Elizabeth, paler and thinner than before — and quite, quite incomprehensible!

As for 'saving' her, Mrs. Gaddesden had not been allowed to attempt it. In the first place, Elizabeth had stoutly denied that there was anything to save her from. 'Don't believe anything at all, dear Mummy, that Arthur Delaine may have said to you! I have made a great friend — of a very interesting man; and I am going to correspond with him. He is coming to London in November, and I have asked him to stay

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here. And you must be *very* kind to him, darling — just as kind as you can be — for he has had a hard time — he saved Philip's life — and he is an uncommonly fine fellow!'

And with that — great readiness to talk about everything except just what Mrs. Gaddesden most wanted to know. Elizabeth sitting on her mother's bed at night, crooning about Canada — her soft brown hair over her shoulders, and her eyes sparkling with patriotic enthusiasm, was a charming figure. But let Mrs. Gaddesden attempt to probe and penetrate beyond a certain point, and the way was resolutely barred. Elizabeth would kiss her mother tenderly — it was as though her own reticence hurt her — but would say nothing. Mrs. Gaddesden could only feel sorely that a great change had come over the being she loved best in the world, and that she was not to know the whys and wherefores of it.

And Philip — alack! had been of very little use to her in the matter!

'Don't you bother your head, mother! Anderson's an awfully good chap — but he's not going to marry Elizabeth. Told me he knew he was n't the kind. And of course he is n't — must draw the line somewhere — hang it! But he's an awfully decent fellow. He's not going to push himself in where he is n't wanted. You let Elizabeth alone, mummy — it'll work off. And of course we must be civil to him when he comes over — I should jolly well think we must — considering he saved my life!'

Certainly they must be civil! News of Anderson's sailing and arrival had been anxiously looked for. He

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had reached London three days before this date, had presented his credentials at the Board of Trade and the Colonial Office, and, after various preliminary interviews, with ministers, was now coming down to Martindale for a week-end before the assembling of the small conference of English and colonial representatives to which he had been sent.

Mrs. Gaddesden gathered from the various notices of his arrival in the English papers that even in England, among the initiated, he was understood to be a man of mark. She was all impatience to see him, and had shown it outwardly much more plainly than Elizabeth. How quiet Elizabeth had been these last days! moving about the house so silently, with vaguely smiling eyes, like one husbanding her strength before an ordeal.

What was going to happen? Mrs. Gaddesden was conscious in her own mind of a strained hush of expectation. But she had never ventured to say a word to Elizabeth. In half an hour — or less — he would be here. A motor had been sent to meet the express train at the country town fifteen miles off. Mrs. Gaddesden looked round her in the warm dusk, as though trying to forecast how Martindale and its inmates would look to the new-comer. She saw a room of medium size, which from the end of the sixteenth century had been known as the Red Drawing-room — a room pannelled in stamped Cordovan leather, and filled with rare and beautiful things; with ebony cabinets, and fine lacquer; with the rarest of Oriental carpets, with carved chairs, and luxurious sofas. Set here and there, sparingly, among the shadows, as though in

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scorn of any vulgar profusion, the eye caught the gleam of old silver, or rock crystal, or agate; *bibelots* collected a hundred and fifty years ago by a Gaddesden of taste, and still in their original places. Overhead, the uneven stucco ceiling showed a pattern of Tudor roses; opposite to Mrs. Gaddesden the wall was divided between a round mirror in whose depths she saw herself reflected and a fine Holbein portrait of a man, in a flat velvet hat on a green background. Over the carved mantelpiece with its date of 1586, there reigned a Romney portrait — one of the most famous in existence — of a young girl in black. Elizabeth Merton bore a curious resemblance to it. Chrysanthemums, white, yellow, and purple, gleamed amid the richness of the room; while the light of the solitary lamp beside which Mrs. Gaddesden had been sitting with her embroidery, blended with the orange glow from outside now streaming in through the unshuttered windows, to deepen a colour effect of extraordinary beauty, produced partly by time, partly by the conscious effort of a dozen generations.

And from the window, under the winter sunset, Mrs. Gaddesden could see, at right angles to her on either side, the northern and southern wings of the great house; the sloping lawns; the river winding through the park; the ivy-grown church among the trees; the distant woods and plantations; the purple outlines of the fells. Just as in the room within, so the scene without was fused into a perfect harmony and keeping by the mellowing light. There was in it not a jarring note, a ragged line; age, and dignity, wealth and undisputed place: — Martindale expressed them

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all. The Gaddesdens had twice refused a peerage; and with contempt. In their belief, to be Mr. Gaddesden of Martindale was enough; a dukedom could not have bettered it. And the whole country-side in which they had been rooted for centuries agreed with them. There had even been a certain disapproval of the financial successes of Philip Gaddesden's father. It was true that the Gaddesden rents had gone down. But the county, however commercialised itself, looked with jealousy on any intrusion of 'commercialism' into the guarded and venerable precincts of Martindale.

The little lady who was now, till Philip's majority and marriage, mistress of Martindale, was a small, soft, tremulous person, without the intelligence of her daughter, but by no means without character. Secretly she had often felt oppressed by her surroundings. Whenever Philip married, she would find it no hardship at all to retire to the dower house at the edge of the park. Meanwhile she did her best to uphold the ancient ways. But if *she* sometimes found Martindale oppressive — too old, too large, too rich, too perfect — how was it going to strike a young Canadian, fresh from the prairies, who had never been in England before?

. . . . . .

A sudden sound of many footsteps in the hall. The drawing-room door was thrown open by Philip, and a troop of men entered. A fresh-coloured man with grizzled hair led the van.

'Well, Mrs. Gaddesden, here we all are. Philip has given us a capital day!'

A group of men followed him; the agent of the pro-

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perty, two small neighbouring squires, a broad-browed burly man in knickerbockers, who was apparently a clergyman, to judge from his white tie, the adjutant of of the local regiment, and a couple of good-looking youths, Etonian friends of Philip. Elizabeth and Mariette came in from the garden, and a young cousin of the Gaddesdens, a Miss Lucas, slipped into the room under Elizabeth's wing. She was a pretty girl, dressed in an elaborate demi-toilette of white chiffon and the younger men of the party in their shooting dress — with Philip at their head — were presently clustered thick about her, like bees after pollen. It was clear, indeed, that Philip was paying her considerable attention, and as he laughed and sparred with her, the transient colour that exercise had given him disappeared, and a pale look of excitement took its place.

Mariette glanced from one to another with a scarcely disguised curiosity. This was only his third visit to England and he felt himself in a foreign country. That was a *pasteur* he supposed, in the gaiters, grotesque! And why was the young lady in evening dress, while Lady Merton, now that she had thrown off her furs, appeared in the severest of tweed coats and skirts? The rosy old fellow beside Mrs. Gaddesden was, he understood from Lady Merton, the Lord Lieutenant of the county.

But that moment his hostess laid hands upon him to present him to her neighbour. 'Monsieur Mariette — Lord Waynflete.'

'Delighted to see you,' said the great man affably, holding out his hand. 'What a fine place Canada is getting! I am thinking of sending my third son there.'

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Mariette bowed.

'There will be room for him.'

'I am afraid he has n't brains enough to do much here, — but perhaps in a new country —'

'He will not require them? Yes, it is a common opinion,' said Mariette, with composure. Lord Waynflete stared a little, and returned to his hostess. Mariette betook himself to Elizabeth for tea, and she introduced him to the girl in white, who looked at him with enthusiasm, and at once threw over her bevy of young men, in favour of the spectacled and lean-faced stranger.

'You are a Catholic, Monsieur?' she asked him, fervently. 'How I envy you! I *adore* the Oratory! When we are in town I always go there to Benediction — unless Mamma wants me at home to pour out tea. Do you know Cardinal C——?'

She named a Cardinal Archbishop then presiding over the diocese of Westminster.

'Yes, Mademoiselle, I know him quite well. I have just been staying with him.'

She clasped her hands eagerly.

'How *very* interesting! I know him a little. *Is n't* he nice?'

'No,' said Mariette resolutely. 'He is magnificent — a saint — a scholar — everything — but not nice!'

The girl looked a little puzzled, then angry, and after a few minutes' more conversation she returned to her young men, conspicuously turning her back on Mariette.

He threw a deprecating, half-penitent look at Elizabeth, whose face twitched with amusement, and sat down in a corner behind her that he might observe

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without talking. His quick intelligence sorted the people about him almost at once — the two yeomanry squires, who were not quite at home in Mrs. Gaddesden's drawing-room, were awkward with their tea-cups, and talked to each other in subdued voices, till Elizabeth found them out, summoned them to her side, and kept them happy; the agent who was helping Lady Merton with tea, making himself generally useful; Philip and another gilded youth, the son, he understood, of a neighbouring peer, who were flirting with the girl in white; and yet a third fastidious Etonian, who was clearly bored by the ladies, and was amusing himself with the adjutant and a cigarette in a distant corner. His eyes came back at last to the *pasteur*. An able face after all; cool, shrewd, and not unspiritual. Very soon he, the parson — whose name was Everett — and Elizabeth were drawn into conversation, and Mariette under Everett's good-humoured glance found himself observed as well as an observer.

'You are trying to decipher us?' said Everett at last, with a smile. 'Well, we are not easy.'

'Could you be a great nation if you were?'

'Perhaps not. England just now is a palimpsest — the new writing everywhere on top of the old. Yet it is the same parchment, and the old is there. Now *you* are writing on a fresh skin.'

'But with the old ideas!' said Mariette, a flash in his dark eyes. 'Church — State — family! — there is nothing else to write with.'

The two men drew closer together, and plunged into conversation. Elizabeth was left solitary a moment, behind the tea things. The buzz of the room, the

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hearty laugh of the Lord Lieutenant, reached the outer ear. But every deeper sense was strained to catch a voice — a step — that must soon be here. And presently across the room, her eyes met her mother's, and their two expectancies touched.

. . . . . .

'Mother! — here is Mr. Anderson.

Philip entered joyously, escorting his guest.

To Anderson's half-dazzled sight, the room which was now fully lit by lamplight and fire, seemed crowded. He found himself greeted by a gentle grey-haired lady of fifty-five, with a strong likeness to a face he knew; and then his hand touched Elizabeth's. Various commonplaces passed between him and her, as to his journey, the new motor which had brought him to the house, the frosty evening. Mariette gave him a nod and smile, and he was introduced to various men who bowed without any change of expression, and to a girl, who smiled carelessly, and turned immediately towards Philip, hanging over the back of her chair.

Elizabeth pointed to a seat beside her, and gave him tea. They talked of London a little, and his first impressions. All the time he was trying to grasp the identity of the woman speaking with the woman he had parted from in Canada. Something surely had gone? This restrained and rather cold person was not the Elizabeth of the Rockies. He watched her when she turned from him to her other guests; her light impersonal manner towards the younger men, with its occasional touch of satire; the friendly relation between her and the parson; the kindly deference she showed the old Lord Lieutenant. Evidently she was mistress

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here, much more than her mother. Everything seemed to be referred to her, to circle round her.

Presently there was a stir in the room. Lord Waynflete asked for his carriage.

'Don't forget, my dear lady, that you open the new Town Hall next Wednesday,' he said, as he made his way to Elizabeth.

She shrugged her shoulders.

'But you make the speech!'

'Not at all. They only want to hear you. And there'll be a great crowd.'

'Elizabeth can't speak worth a cent!' said Philip, with brotherly candour. 'Can you, Lisa?'

'I don't believe it,' said Lord Waynflete, 'but it don't matter. All they want is that a Gaddesden should say something. Ah, Mrs. Gaddesden — how glorious the Romney looks to-night!' He turned to the fireplace, admiring the illuminated picture, his hands on his sides.

'Is it an ancestress?' Mariette addressed the question to Elizabeth.

'Yes. She had three husbands, and is supposed to have murdered the fourth,' said Elizabeth dryly.

'All the same she's an extremely handsome woman,' put in Lord Waynflete. 'And as you're the image of her, Lady Merton, you'd better not run her down.' Elizabeth joined in the laugh against herself and the speaker turned to Anderson.

'You'll find this place a perfect treasure-house, Mr. Anderson, and I advise you to study it — for the Radicals won't leave any of us anything, before many years are out. You're from Manitoba? Ah, you're not

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troubled with any of these Socialist fellows yet! But you'll get 'em — you'll get 'em — like rats in the corn. They'll pull the old flag down if they can. But you'll help us to keep it flying. The Colonies are our hope — we look to the Colonies!'

The handsome old man raised an oratorical hand, and looked round on his audience, like one to whom public speaking was second nature. Anderson made a gesture of assent; he was not really expected to say anything. Mariette in the background observed the speaker with an amused and critical detachment.

'Your carriage will be round directly, Lord Waynflete,' said Philip, 'but I don't see why you should go.'

'My dear fellow! — I have to catch the night train. There is a most important debate in the House of Lords to-morrow.' He turned to the Canadian politely. 'Of course you know there is an autumn session on. With these Radical Governments we shall soon have one every year.'

'What! the Education Bill again to-morrow?' said Everett. 'What are you going to do with it?'

Lord Waynflete looked at the speaker with some distaste. He did not much approve of sporting parsons, and Everett's opinions were too Liberal to please him. But he let himself be drawn, and soon the whole room was in eager debate on some of the old hot issues between Church and Dissent. Lord Waynflete ceased to be merely fatuous and kindly. His talk became shrewd, statesmanlike even; he was the typical English aristocrat and Anglican Churchman, discussing topics with which he had been familiar from his cradle, and in a manner and tone which every man in the

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room — save the two Canadians — accepted without question. He was the natural leader of these men of the landowning or military class; they liked to hear him harangue; and harangue he did, till the striking of a clock suddenly checked him.

'I must be off! Well, Mrs. Gaddesden, it 's the *Church* — the Church we have to think of! — the Church we have to fight for! What would England be without the Church! — let 's ask ourselves that. Good-bye — good-bye!'

'Is he talking of the Anglican establishment?' muttered Mariette. '*Quel drôle de vieillard!*'

The parson heard him, and with a twinkle in his eyes, turned and proposed to show the French Canadian the famous library of the house.

The party melted away. Even Elizabeth had been summoned for some last word with Lord Waynflete on the subject of the opening of the Town Hall. Anderson was left alone.

He looked round him, at the room, the pictures, the panelled walls, and then moving to the window which was still unshuttered, he gazed out into the starlit dusk, and the dim stately landscape. There were lights in the church, shewing the stained glass of the perpendicular windows, and a flight of rooks was circling round the old tower.

As he stood there, somebody came back into the room. It was the adjutant, looking for his hat.

'Jolly old place, is n't it?' said the young man civilly, seeing that the stranger was studying the view. 'It 's to be hoped that Philip will keep it up properly.'

'He seems fond of it,' said Anderson.

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'Oh, yes! But you've got to be a big man to fill the position. However, there's money enough. They're all rich — and they marry money.'

Anderson murmured something inaudible, and the young man departed.

. . . . . .

A little later Anderson and Elizabeth were seated together in the Red Drawing-room. Mrs. Gaddesden, after a little perfunctory conversation with the newcomer, had disappeared on the plea of letters to write. The girl in white, the centre of a large party in the hall, was flirting to her heart's content. Philip would have dearly liked to stay and flirt with her himself; but his mother, terrified by his pallor and fatigue after the exertion of the shoot, had hurried him off to take a warm bath and rest before dinner. So that Anderson and Elizabeth were alone.

Conversation between them did not move easily. Elizabeth was conscious of an oppression against which it seemed vain to fight. Up to the moment of his sailing from Canada his letters had been frank and full, the letters of a deeply attached friend, though with no trace in them of the language of love. What change was it that the touch of English ground — the sight of Martindale — had wrought? He talked with some readiness of the early stages of his mission — of the kindness shewn to him by English public men, and the impressions of a first night in the House of Commons. But his manner was constrained; anything that he said might have been heard by all the world; and as their talk progressed, Elizabeth felt a miserable paralysis descending on her own will. She grew whiter and

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whiter. This old house in which they sat, with its splendours and treasures, this environment of the past all about them seemed to engulf and entomb them both. She had looked forward with a girlish pleasure, — and yet with a certain tremor — to shewing Anderson her old home, the things she loved and had inherited. And now it was as though she were vulgarly conscious of wealth and ancestry as dividing her from him. The wildness within her which had found its scope and its voice in Canada was here like an imprisoned stream, chafing in caverns underground. Ah! it had been easy to defy the Old World in Canada, its myriad voices and claims — the many-fingered magic with which an old society plays on those born into it!

'I shall be here perhaps a month,' said Anderson, 'but then I shall be wanted at Ottawa.'

And he began to describe a new matter in which he had been lately engaged — a large development scheme applying to some of the great Peace River region north of Edmonton. And as he told her of his August journey through this noble country, with its superb rivers, its shining lakes and forests, and its scattered settlers, waiting for a Government which was their servant and not their tyrant, to come and help their first steps in ordered civilisation; to bring steamers to their waters, railways to link their settlements, and fresh settlers to let loose the fertile forces of their earth: — she suddenly saw in him his old self — the Anderson who had sat beside her in the crossing of the prairies, who had looked into her eyes the day of Rogers Pass. He had grown older and thinner; his hair was even lightly touched with grey. But the traces in

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him of endurance and of pain were like the weathering of a fine building; mellowing had come, and strength had not been lost.

Yet still no word of feeling, of intimacy even. Her soul cried out within her, but there was no answer. Then, when it was time to dress, and she led him through the hall, to the inlaid staircase with its famous balustrading — early English ironwork of extraordinary delicacy — and through the endless corridors upstairs, old and dim, but crowded with portraits and fine furniture, Anderson looked round him in amazement.

'What a wonderful place!'

'It is too old!' cried Elizabeth, petulantly; then with a touch of repentance — 'Yet of course we love it. We are not so stifled here as you would be.'

He smiled and did not reply.

'Confess you have been stifled! — ever since you came to England.'

He drew a long breath, throwing back his head with a gesture which made Elizabeth smile. He smiled in return.

'It was you who warned me how small it would all seem. Such little fields — such little rivers — such tiny journeys! And these immense towns treading on each other's heels. Don't you feel crowded up?'

'You are home-sick already?'

He laughed — 'No, no!' But the gleam in his eyes admitted it. And Elizabeth's heart sank — down and down.

A few more guests arrived for Sunday — a couple of politicians, a journalist, a poet, one or two agreeable

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women, a young Lord S., who had just succeeded to one of the oldest of English marquisates, and so on.

Elizabeth had chosen the party to give Anderson pleasure, and as a guest he did not disappoint her pride in him. He talked well and modestly, and the feeling towards Canada and the Canadians in English society has been of late years so friendly that although there was often colossal ignorance there was no coolness in the atmosphere about him. Lord S. confused Lake Superior with Lake Ontario, and was of opinion that the Mackenzie River flowed into the Ottawa. But he was kind enough to say that he would far sooner go to Canada than to any of 'those beastly places abroad' — and as he was just a simple handsome youth, Anderson took to him, as he had taken to Philip at Lake Louise, and by the afternoon of Sunday was talking sport and big game in a manner to hold the smoking-room enthralled.

Only unfortunately Philip was not there to hear. He had been over-tired by the shoot, and had caught a chill beside. The doctor was in the house, and Mrs. Gaddesden had very little mind to give to her Sunday party. Elizabeth felt a thrill of something like comfort as she noticed how in the course of the day Anderson unconsciously slipped back into the old Canadian position; sitting with Philip, amusing him and 'chaffing' him; inducing him to obey his doctor; cheering his mother, and in general producing in Martindale itself the same impression of masculine help and support which he had produced on Elizabeth, five months before, in a Canadian hotel.

By Sunday evening Mrs. Gaddesden, instead of a

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watchful enemy, had become his firm friend; and in her timid confused way she asked him to come for a walk with her in the November dusk. Then, to his astonishment, she poured out her heart to him about her son, whose health, together with his recklessness, his determination to live like other and sound men, was making the two women who loved him more and more anxious. Anderson was very sorry for the little lady, and genuinely alarmed himself with regard to Philip, whose physical condition seemed to him to have changed considerably for the worse since the Canadian journey. His kindness, his real concern melted Mrs. Gaddesden's heart.

'I hope we shall find you in town when we come up!' she said, eagerly, as they turned back to the house, forgetting, in her maternal egotism, everything but her boy. 'Our man here wants a consultation. We shall go up next week for a short time before Christmas.'

Anderson hesitated a moment.

'Yes,' he said, slowly, but in a changed voice, 'yes, I shall still be there.'

Whereupon, with perturbation, Mrs. Gaddesden at last remembered that there were other lions in the path. They had not said a single word — however conventional — of Elizabeth. But she quickly consoled herself by the reflexion that he must have seen by now, poor fellow, how hopeless it was; and that being so, what was there to be said against admitting him to their circle, as a real friend of all the family — Philip's friend, Elizabeth's, and her own?

. . . . . .

That night, Mrs. Gaddesden was awakened by her

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maid between twelve and one. Mr. Gaddesden wanted a certain medicine that he thought was in his mother's room. Mrs. Gaddesden threw on her dressing-gown and looked for it anxiously in vain. Perhaps Elizabeth might remember where it was last seen. She hurried to her. Elizabeth had a sitting-room and bed-room at the end of the corridor, and Mrs. Gaddesden went into the sitting-room first, as quietly as possible, so as not to startle her daughter.

She had hardly entered and closed the door behind her, guided by the light of a still flickering fire, when a sound from the inner room arrested her.

Elizabeth? — Elizabeth in distress?

The mother stood rooted to the spot, in a sudden anguish. Elizabeth — sobbing? Only once in her life had Mrs. Gaddesden heard that sound before — the night that the news of Francis Merton's death reached Martindale, and Elizabeth had wept, as her mother believed, more for what her young husband might have been to her, than for what he had been. Elizabeth's eyes filled readily with tears answering to pity or high feeling; but this fierce stifled emotion — this abandonment of pain!

Mrs. Gaddesden stood trembling and motionless, the tears on her own cheeks. Conjecture hurried through her mind. She seemed to be learning her daughter, her gay and tender Elizabeth, afresh. At last she turned and crept out of the room, noiselessly shutting the door. After lingering a while in the passage, she knocked, with an uncertain hand, and waited till Elizabeth came — Elizabeth, hardly visible in the firelight, her brown hair falling like a veil round her face.

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CHAPTER XIV

A FEW days later the Gaddesdens were in town, settled in a house in Portman Square. Philip was increasingly ill, and moreover shrouded in a bitterness of spirit which wrung his mother's heart. She suspected a new cause for it in the fancy that he had lately taken for Alice Lucas, the girl in white chiffon who had piped to Mariette in vain. Not that he ever now wanted to see her. He had passed into a phase indeed of refusing all society, — except that of George Anderson. A floor of the Portman Square house was given up to him. Various treatments were being tried, and as soon as he was strong enough his mother was to take him to the South. Meanwhile his only pleasure seemed to lie in Anderson's visits, which however could not be frequent, for the business of the Conference was heavy, and after the daily sittings were over, the interviews and correspondence connected with them took much time.

On these occasions, whether early in the morning before the business of the day began, or in the hour before dinner — sometimes even late at night — Anderson, after his chat with the invalid, would descend from Philip's room to the drawing-room below, only allowing himself a few minutes, and glancing always with a quickening of the pulse through the shadows of the large room, to see whether it held two persons or one. Mrs. Gaddesden was invariably there; a small faded

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woman, in trailing lace dresses, who would sit waiting for him, her embroidery on her knee, and when he appeared would hurry across the floor to meet him, dropping silks, scissors, handkerchiefs on the way. This dropping of all her incidental possessions — a performance repeated night after night, and followed always by her soft fluttering apologies — soon came to be symbolic, in Anderson's eyes. She moved on the impulse of the moment, without thinking what she might scatter by the way. Yet the impulse was always a loving impulse, — and the regrets were sincere.

As to the relation to Anderson, Philip was here the pivot of the situation exactly as he had been in Canada. Just as his physical weakness, and the demands he founded upon it, had bound the Canadian to their chariot wheels in the Rockies, so now — *mutatis mutandis* — in London. Mrs. Gaddesden before a week was over had become pitifully dependent upon him, simply because Philip was pleased to desire his society, and showed a flicker of cheerfulness whenever he appeared. She was torn indeed between her memory of Elizabeth's sobbing, and her hunger to give Philip the moon out of the sky, should he happen to want it. Sons must come first, daughters second; such has been the philosophy of mothers from the beginning. She feared — desperately feared — that Elizabeth had given her heart away. And as she agreed with Philip that it would not be a seemly or tolerable marriage for Elizabeth, she would, in the natural course of things both for Elizabeth's sake and the family's, have tried to keep the unseemly suitor at a distance. But here he was, planted somehow in the very midst of their life, and she, mak-

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ing her feeble efforts day after day to induce him to root himself there still more firmly! Sometimes indeed she would try to press alternatives on Philip. But Philip would not have them. What with the physical and moral force that seemed to radiate from Anderson, and bring stimulus with them to the weaker life, — and what with the lad's sick alienation for the moment from his ordinary friends and occupations, Anderson reigned supreme, often clearly to his own trouble and embarrassment. Had it not been for Philip, Portman Square would have seen him but seldom. That Elizabeth knew, with a sharp certainty, dim though it might be to her mother. But as it was, the boy's tragic clinging to his new friend governed all else, simply because at the bottom of each heart, unrecognised and unexpressed, lurked the same foreboding, the same fear of fears.

The tragic clinging was also, alack, a tragic selfishness. Philip had a substantial share of that quick perception which in Elizabeth became something exquisite and impersonal, the source of all high emotions. When Delaine had first suggested to him 'an attachment' between Anderson and his sister, a hundred impressions of his own had emerged to verify the statement and aggravate his wrath; and when Anderson had said 'A man with my story is not going to ask your sister to marry him,' Philip perfectly understood that but for the story the attempt would have been made. Anderson was therefore — most unreasonably and presumptuously — in love with Elizabeth; and as to Elizabeth, the indications here also were not lost upon Philip. It was all very amazing, and he wished,

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to use his phrase to his mother, that it would 'work off.' But whether or no, he could not do without Anderson — if Anderson was to be had. He threw him and Elizabeth together, recklessly; trusting to Anderson's word, and unable to resist his own craving for comfort and distraction.

The days passed on, days so charged with feeling for Elizabeth that they could only be met at all by a kind of resolute stillness and self-control. Philip was very dependent on the gossip his mother and sister brought him from the world outside. Elizabeth, therefore, to please him, went into society as usual, and forgot her heartaches, for her brother and for herself, as best she could. Outwardly she was much occupied in doing all that could be done — socially and even politically — for Anderson and Mariette. She had power and she used it. The two friends found themselves the objects of one of those sudden cordialities that open all doors, even the most difficult, and run like a warm wave through London society. Mariette remained throughout the ironic spectator — friendly on his own terms, but entirely rejecting, often, the terms offered him, tacitly or openly, by his English acquaintance.

'Your ways are not mine — your ideals are not mine, God forbid they should be!' — he seemed to be constantly saying. 'But we happen to be oxen bound under the same yoke, and dragging the same plough. No gush, please! — but at the same time no ill-will! Loyal? — to your loyalties? Oh yes — quite sufficiently — so long as you don't ask us to let it interfere with our loyalty to our own! Don't be such fools as to expect us to take much interest in your Imperial

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orgies. But we're all right! Only let us alone! — we're all right!'

Such seemed to be the voice of this queer, kindly, satiric personality. London generally falls into the arms of those who flout her; and Mariette, with his militant Catholicism, and his contempt for our governing ideals, became the fashion. As for Anderson, the contact with English Ministers and men of affairs had but carried on the generous process of development that Nature had designed for a strong man. Whereas in Mariette the vigorous, self-confident English world — based on the Protestant idea — produced a bitter and profound irritation, Anderson seemed to find in that world something ripening and favouring that brought out all the powers — the intellectual powers at least — of his nature. He did his work admirably; left the impression of 'a coming man' on a great many leading persons interested in the relations between England and Canada; and when, as often happened, Elizabeth and he found themselves at the same dinner-table, she would watch the changes in him that a larger experience was bringing about, with a heart half proud, half miserable. As for his story, which was very commonly known, in general society, it only added to his attractions. Mothers who were under no anxiety lest he might want to marry their daughters, murmured the facts of his unlucky *provenance* to each other, and then the more eagerly asked him to dinner.

Meanwhile, for Elizabeth, life was one long debate, which left her often at night exhausted and spiritless. The shock of their first meeting at Martindale, when all her pent-up yearning and vague expectation had

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been met and crushed by the silent force of the man's unaltered will, had passed away. She understood him better. The woman who is beloved penetrates to the fact through all the disguises that a lover may attempt. Elizabeth knew well that Anderson had tones and expressions for her that no other woman could win from him; and looking back to their conversation at the Glacier House, she realised, night after night, in the silence of wakeful hours, the fulness of his confession, together with the strength of his recoil from any pretension to marry her.

Yes, he loved her, and his mere anxiety — now, and as things stood, — to avoid any extension or even repetition of their short-lived intimacy, only betrayed the fact the more eloquently. Moreover, he had reason, good reason, to think, as she often passionately reminded herself, that he had touched her heart, and that, had the course been clear, he might have won her.

But — the course was not clear. From many signs, she understood how deeply the humiliation of the scene at Sicamous had entered into a proud man's blood. Others might forget; he remembered. Moreover that sense of responsibility — partial responsibility at least — for his father's guilt and degradation, of which he had spoken to her at Glacier, had, she perceived, gone deep with him. It had strengthened a stern and melancholy view of life, inclining him to turn away from personal joy, to an exclusive concern with public duties and responsibilities.

And this whole temper had no doubt been increased by his perception of the Gaddesden's place in English society. He dared not — he would not — ask a woman

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so reared in the best that England had to give, now that he understood what that best might be, to renounce it all in favour of what he had to offer. He realised that there was a generous weakness in her own heart on which he might have played. But he would not play; his fixed intention was to disappear as soon as possible from her life; and it was his honest hope that she would marry in her own world and forget him. In fact he was the prey of a kind of moral terror that here also, as in the case of his father, he might make some ghastly mistake, pursuing his own will under the guise of love, as he had once pursued it under the guise of retribution — to Elizabeth's hurt and his own remorse.

All this Elizabeth understood, more or less plainly. Then came the question — granted the situation, how was she to deal with it? Just as he surmised that he could win her if he would, she too believed that were she merely to set herself to prove her own love and evoke his, she could probably break down his resistance. A woman knows her own power. Feverishly, Elizabeth was sometimes on the point of putting it out, of so provoking and appealing to the passion she divined, as to bring him, whether he would or no, to her feet.

But she hesitated. She too felt the responsibility of his life, as he of hers. Could she really do this thing? — not only begin it, but carry it through without repentance and without recoil?

She made herself look steadily at this English spectacle with its luxurious complexity, its concentration within a small space of all the delicacies of sense and soul, its command of a rich European tradition, in

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which art and literature are living streams springing from fathomless depths of life. Could she, whose every fibre responded so perfectly to the stimulus of this environment, who up till now — but for moments of revolt — had been so happy and at ease in it, could she wrench herself from it — put it behind her — and adapt herself to quite another, without, so to speak, losing herself, and half her value, whatever that might be, as a human being?

As we know, she had already asked herself the question in some fashion, under the shadow of the Rockies. But to handle it in London was a more pressing and poignant affair. It was partly the characteristic question of the modern woman, jealous, as women have never been before in the world's history, on behalf of her own individuality. But Elizabeth put it still more in the interests of her pure and passionate feeling for Anderson. He must not — he should not — run any risks in loving her!

On a certain night early in December, Elizabeth had been dining at one of the great houses of London. Anderson too had been there. The dinner party, held in a famous room panelled with full-length Vandycks, had been of the kind that only London can show; since only in England is society at once homogeneous enough and open enough to provide it. In this house, also, the best traditions of an older régime still prevailed, and its gatherings recalled — not without some conscious effort on the part of the hostess — the days of Holland House and Lady Palmerston. To its smaller dinner parties, which were the object of so many social ambitions, nobody was admitted who could not bring a

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personal contribution. Dukes had no more claim than other people, but as most of the twenty-eight were blood-relations of the house, and some Dukes are agreeable, they took their turn. Cabinet Ministers, Viceroys, Ambassadors mingled with the men of letters and affairs. There was indeed a certain old-fashioned measure in it all. To be merely notorious — even though you were amusing — was not passport enough. The hostess, — a beautiful tall woman, with the brow of a child, a quick intellect, and an amazing experience of life — created round her an atmosphere that was really the expression of her own personality; fastidious, and yet eager; cold, and yet steeped in intellectual curiosities and passions. Under the mingled stimulus and restraint of it, men and women brought out the best that was in them. The talk was good, and nothing, — neither the last violinist, nor the latest *danseuse* — was allowed to interfere with it. And while the dress and jewels of the women were generally what a luxurious capital expects and provides, you might often find some little girl in a dyed frock — with courage, charm and breeding — the centre of the scene.

Elizabeth, in white, and wearing some fine jewels which had been her mother's, had found herself placed on the left of her host, with an ex-Viceroy of India on her other hand. Anderson, who was on the opposite side of the table, watched her animation, and the homage that was eagerly paid her by the men around her. Those indeed who had known her of old were of opinion that whereas she had always been an agreeable companion, Lady Merton had now for some mysteri-

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ous reason blossomed into a beauty. Some kindling change had passed over the small features. Delicacy and reserve were still there, but interfused now with a shimmering and transforming brightness, as though some flame within leapt intermittently to sight.

Elizabeth more than held her own with the ex-Viceroy, who was a person of brilliant parts, accustomed to be flattered by women. She did not flatter him, and he was reduced in the end to making those efforts for himself, which he generally expected other people to make for him. Elizabeth's success with him drew the attention of several other persons at the table besides Anderson. The ex-Viceroy was a bachelor, and one of the great *partis* of the day. What could be more fitting than that Elizabeth Merton should carry him off, to the discomfiture of innumerable intriguers?

After dinner, Elizabeth waited for Anderson in the magnificent gallery upstairs where the guests of the evening party were beginning to gather, and the musicians were arriving. When he came she played her usual fairy godmother's part; introducing him to this person, and that, creating an interest in him and in his work, wherever it might be helpful to him. It was understood that she had met him in Canada, and that he had been useful to the poor delicate brother. No other idea entered in. That she could have any interest in him for herself would have seemed incredible to this world looking on.

'I must slip away,' said Anderson, presently, in her ear; 'I promised to look in on Philip if possible. And to-morrow I fear I shall be too busy.'

And he went on to tell her his own news of the day,—

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that the Conference would be over sooner than he supposed, and that he must get back to Ottawa without delay to report to the Canadian Ministry. That afternoon he had written to take his passage for the following week.

It seemed to her that he faltered in telling her; and, as for her, the crowd of uniformed or jewelled figures around them became to her, as he spoke, a mere meaningless confusion. She was only conscious of him, and of the emotion which at last he could not hide.

She quietly said that she would soon follow him to Portman Square, and he went away. A few minutes afterwards, Elizabeth said good-night to her hostess, and emerged upon the gallery running round the fine Italianate hall which occupied the centre of the house. Hundreds of people were hanging over the balustrading of the gallery, watching the guests coming and going on the marble staircase which occupied the centre of the hall.

Elizabeth's slight figure slowly descended.

'Pretty creature!' said one old General, looking down upon her. 'You remember? — she was a Gaddesden of Martindale. She has been a widow a long time now. Why does n't someone carry her off?'

Meanwhile Elizabeth, as she went down, dreamily, from step to step, her eyes bent apparently upon the crowd which filled all the spaces of the great pictorial house, was conscious of one of those transforming impressions which represent the sudden uprush and consummation in the mind of some obscure and long-continued process.

One moment, she saw the restless scene below her,

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the diamonds, the uniforms, the blaze of electric light, the tapestries on the walls, the handsome faces of men and women, the next, it had been wiped out; the prairies unrolled before her; she beheld a green, boundless land, invaded by a mirage of sunny water; scattered through it, the white farms; above it, a vast dome of sky, with summer clouds in glistening ranks climbing the steep of blue; and at the horizon's edge, a line of snow-peaks. Her soul leapt within her. It was as though she felt the freshness of the prairie wind upon her cheek, while the call of that distant land — Anderson's country — its simpler life, its undetermined fates, beat through her heart.

And as she answered to it, there was no sense of renunciation. She was denying no old affection, deserting no ancient loyalty. Old and new: — she seemed to be the child of both — gathering them both into her breast.

Yet, practically, what was going to happen to her, she did not know. She did not say to herself, 'It is all clear, and I am going to marry George Anderson!' But what she knew at last was that there was no dull hindrance in herself, no cowardice in her own will; she was ready when life and Anderson should call her.

At the foot of the stairs Mariette's gaunt and spectacled face broke in upon her trance. He had just arrived as she was departing.

'You are off — so early?' he asked her, reproachfully.

'I want to see Philip before he settles for the night.'

'Anderson, too, meant to look in upon your brother.'

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'Yes?' said Elizabeth vaguely, conscious of her own reddening, and of Mariette's glance.

'You have heard his news?' He drew her a little apart into the shelter of a stand of flowers. 'We both go next week. You — Lady Merton — have been our good angel — our providence. Has he been saying that to you? All the same — *ma collègue!* — I am disappointed in you!'

Elizabeth's eye wavered under his.

'We agreed, did we not? — at Glacier — on what was to be done next for our friend. Oh! don't dispute! I laid it down — and you accepted it. As for me, I have done nothing but pursue that object ever since — in my own way. And you, Madame?'

As he stood over her, a lean Don Quixotish figure, his long arms akimbo, Elizabeth's fluttering laugh broke out.

'Inquisitor! Good-night!'

'Good-night — but — just a word! Anderson has done well here. Your public men say agreeable things of him. He will play your English game — your English Imperialist game — which I can't play. But only, if he is happy! — if the fire in him is fed. Consider! Is it not a patriotic duty to feed it?'

And grasping her hand, he looked at her with a gentle mockery that passed immediately into that sudden seriousness — that unconscious air of command — of which the man of interior life holds the secret. In his jests even, he is still, by natural gift, the confessor, the director, since he sees everything as the mystic sees it, *sub specie æternitatis.*

Elizabeth's soft colour came and went. But she

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made no reply — except it were through an imperceptible pressure of the hand holding her own.

At that moment the ex-Viceroy, resplendent in his ribbon of the Garter, who was passing through the hall, perceived her, pounced upon her, and insisted on seeing her to her carriage. Mariette as he mounted the staircase watched the two figures disappear — smiling to himself.

But on the way home the cloud of sisterly grief descended on Elizabeth. How could she think of herself — when Philip was ill, — suffering — threatened? And how would he bear the news of Anderson's hastened departure?

As soon as she reached home, she was told by the sleepy butler that Mrs. Gaddesden was in the drawing-room, and that Mr. Anderson was still upstairs with Mr. Philip.

As she entered the drawing-room, her mother came running towards her with a stifled cry: —

'Oh Lisa, Lisa!'

In terror, Elizabeth caught her mother in her arms.

'Mother! — is he worse?'

'No! At least Barnett declares to me there is no real change. But he has made up his mind, to-day, that he will never get better. He told me so this evening, just after you had gone; and Barnett could not satisfy him. He has sent for Mr. Robson.' Robson was the family lawyer.

The two women looked at one another in a pale despair. They had reached the moment when, in dealing with a sick man, the fictions of love drop away, and the inexorable appears.

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'And now he'll break his heart over Mr. Anderson's going!' murmured the mother, in an anguish. 'I did n't want him to see Philip to-night, — but Philip heard his ring — and sent down for him.'

They sat looking at each other, hand in hand, — waiting — and listening. Mrs. Gaddesden murmured a broken report of the few words of conversation which rose now, like a blank wall, between all the past, and this present; and Elizabeth listened, the diamonds in her hair and the folds of her satin dress glistening among the shadows of the half-lit room, the slow tears on her cheeks.

At last a step descended. Anderson entered the room.

'He wants you,' he said to Elizabeth, as the two women rose. 'I am afraid you must go to him.'

The electric light immediately above him shewed his frowning shaken look.

'He is so distressed by your going?' asked Elizabeth, trembling.

Anderson did not answer, except to repeat insistently —

'You must go to him. I don't myself think he is any worse — but —'

Elizabeth hurried away. Anderson sat down beside Mrs. Gaddesden, and began to talk to her.

. . . . . .

When his sister entered his room, Philip was sitting up in an arm-chair near the fire; looking so hectic, so death-doomed, so young, that his sister ran to him in an agony — 'Darling Philip! — My precious Philip — why did you want me? Why are n't you asleep?'

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She bent over him and kissed his forehead, and then taking his hand she laid it against her cheek, caressing it tenderly.

'I'm not asleep, — because I've had to think of a great many things,' said the boy in a firm tone. 'Sit down, please, Elizabeth. For a few days past, I've been pretty certain about myself — and to-night I screwed it out of Barnett. I have n't said anything to you and mother, but — well, the long and short of it is, Lisa, I'm not going to recover — that's all nonsense — my heart 's too dicky — I'm going to die.'

She protested, with tears, but he impatiently asked her to be calm. 'I've got to say something — something important — and don't you make it harder, Elizabeth! I'm not going to get well, I tell you — and though I'm not of age — legally — yet I do represent father — I am the head of the family — and I have a right to think for you and mother. Have n't I?'

The contrast between the authoritative voice, the echo of things in him ancestral and instinctive, and the poor lad's tremulous fragility, was moving indeed. But he would not let her caress him.

'Well, these last weeks, I've been thinking a great deal, I can tell you, and I was n't going to say anything to you and mother till I'd got it straight. — But now, all of a sudden, Anderson comes and says that he's going back —. Look here, Elizabeth! — I've just been speaking to Anderson. You know that he's in love with you? — of course you do!'

With a great effort, Elizabeth controlled herself. She lifted her face to her brother's as she sat on a low chair beside him. 'Yes, dear Philip, I know.'

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'And did you know too that he had promised me not to ask you to marry him?'

Elizabeth started.

'No — not exactly. But perhaps — I guessed.'

'He did then!' said Philip, wearily. 'Of course I told him what I thought of his wanting to marry you, in the Rockies; and he behaved awfully decently. He'd never have said a word, I think, without my leave. Well! — now I've changed my mind!'

Elizabeth could not help smiling through her tears. With what merry scorn would she have met this assertion of the *patria potestas* from the mouth of a sound brother! Her poor Philip!

'Dear old boy! — what have you been saying to Mr. Anderson?'

'Well!' — the boy choked a little — 'I've been telling him that — well, never mind! — he knows what I think about him. Perhaps if I'd known him years ago — I'd have been different. That don't matter. But I want to settle things up for you and him. Because you know, Elizabeth, you're pretty gone on him, too!'

Elizabeth hid her face against his knee — without speaking. The boy resumed: —

'And so I've been telling him that now I thought differently — I hoped he would ask you to marry him — and I knew that you cared for him — but that he must n't dream of taking you to Canada. That was all nonsense! — could n't be thought of! He must settle here. You've lots of money; — and — well, when I'm gone, — you'll have more. Of course Martindale will go away from us, and I know he will look after mother as well as you.'

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There was silence — till Elizabeth murmured —

'And what did he say?'

The lad drew himself away from her with an angry movement.

'He refused!'

Elizabeth lifted herself, a gleam of something splendid and passionate lighting up her small face.

'And what else, dear Philip, did you expect?'

'I expected him to look at it reasonably!' cried the boy. 'How can he ask a woman like you to go and live with him on the prairies? It 's ridiculous! He can go into English politics, if he wants politics. Why should n't he live on your money? Everybody does it!'

'Did you really understand what you were asking him to do, Philip?'

'Of course I did! Why, what's Canada compared to England? Jolly good thing for him. Why he might be anything here! And as if I would n't rather be a dustman in England than a —'

'Philip, my dear boy! do rest! — do go to bed,' cried his mother imploringly, coming into the room with her soft hurrying step. 'It's going on for one o'clock. Elizabeth must n't keep you talking like this!'

She smiled at him with uplifted finger, trying to hide from him all traces of emotion.

But her son looked at her steadily.

'Mother, is Anderson gone?'

'No,' said Mrs. Gaddesden, with hesitation. 'But he does n't want you to talk any more to-night — he begs you not. Please! — Philip!'

'Ask him to come here!' said Philip, peremptorily. 'I want to talk both to him and Elizabeth.'

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Mrs. Gaddesden protested in vain. The mother and daughter looked at each other with flushed faces, holding a kind of mute dialogue. Then Elizabeth rose from her seat by the fire.

'I will call Mr. Anderson, Philip. But if we convince you that what you ask is quite impossible, will you promise to go quietly to bed and try to sleep? It breaks mother's heart, you know, to see you straining yourself like this.'

Philip nodded, — a crimson spot in each cheek, his frail hands twining and untwining as he tried to compose himself.

Elizabeth went half-way down the stairs and called. Anderson hurried out of the drawing-room, and saw her bending to him from the shadows, very white and calm.

'Will you come back to Philip a moment?' she said, gently. 'Philip has told me what he proposed to you.'

Anderson could not find a word to say. In a blind tumult of feeling he caught her hand, and pressed his lips to it, as though appealing to her dumbly to understand him.

She smiled at him.

'It will be all right,' she whispered. 'My poor Philip!' and she led him back to the sick-room.

'George — I wanted you to come back, to talk this thing out,' said Philip, turning to him as he entered, with the tyranny of weakness. 'There's no time to waste. You know — everybody knows — I may get worse — and there'll be nothing settled. It's my duty to settle —'

Elizabeth interrupted him.

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'Philip darling —!'

She was hanging over his chair, while Anderson stood a few feet away, leaning against the mantelpiece, his face turned from the brother and sister. The intimacy — solemnity almost — of the sick-room, the midnight hour, seemed to strike through Elizabeth's being, deepening and yet liberating emotion.

'Dear Philip! — It is not for Mr. Anderson to answer you — it is for me. If he could give up his country — for happiness — even for love! — I should not ever marry him — for — I should not love him any more.'

Anderson turned to look at her. She had moved, and was now standing in front of Philip, her head thrown back a little, her hands lightly clasped in front of her. Her youth, her dress, her diamonds, combined strangely with the touch of high passion in her shining eyes, her resolute voice.

'You see, dear Philip, I love George Anderson —'

Anderson gave a low cry — and, moving to her side, he grasped her hand. She gave it him, smiling, — and went on: —

'I love him — partly — because he is so true to his own people — because I saw him first — and knew him first — among them. No! dear Philip, he has his work to do in Canada — in that great, great nation that is to be. He has been trained for it — no one else can do it but he — and neither you nor I must tempt him from it.'

The eyes of the brother and sister met. Elizabeth tried for a lighter tone.

'But as neither of us *could* tempt him from it — it is no use talking — is it?'

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Philip looked from her to Anderson in a frowning silence. No one spoke for a little while. Then it seemed to them as though the young man recognised that his effort had failed, and his physical weakness shrank from renewing it. But he still resisted his mother's attempt to put an end to the scene.

'That's all very well, Lisa,' he said at last, 'but what are you going to do?'

Elizabeth withdrew her hand from Anderson's.

'What am I going to do? *Wait!* — just that!'

But her lip trembled. And to hide it she sank down again in the low chair in front of her brother, propping her face in both hands.

'Wait?' repeated Philip, scornfully, — 'and what for?'

'Till you and mother — come to my way of thinking — and' — she faltered — 'till Mr. Anderson —'

Her voice failed her a moment. Anderson stood motionless, bending towards her, hanging upon her every gesture and tone.

'Till Mr. Anderson' — she resumed, 'is — well! — is brave enough to — trust a woman! — and! — oh! good Heavens!' — she dashed the tears from her eyes, half laughing, as her self-control broke down — 'clever enough to save her from proposing to him in this abominable way!'

She sprang to her feet impatiently. Anderson would have caught her in his arms; but with a flashing look, she put him aside. A wail broke from Mrs. Gaddesden:

'Lisa! — you won't leave us!'

'Never, darling! unless you send me! — or come with me! And now, don't you think, Philip dearest,

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you might let us all go to bed? You are not really worse, you know; and mother and I are going to carry you off south — very, very soon.'

She bent to him and kissed his brow. Philip's face gradually changed beneath her look, from the tension and gloom with which he had begun the scene to a kind of boyish relief, — a touch of pleasure — of mischief even. His high, majestical pretensions vanished away; a light and volatile mind thought no more of them; and he turned eagerly to another idea.

'Elizabeth, do you know that you have proposed to Anderson?'

'If I have, it was your fault.'

'He hasn't said Yes!'

Elizabeth was silent. Anderson came forward — but Philip stopped him with a gesture.

'He can't say Yes — till I give him back his promise,' said the boy, triumphantly. 'Well, George, I do give it you back — on one condition — that you put off going for a week, and that you come back as soon as you can. By Jove, I think you owe me that!'

Anderson's difficult smile answered him.

'And now you've got rid of your beastly Conference, you can come in and talk business with me to-morrow — next day — every day!' Philip resumed. 'Can't he, Elizabeth? If you're going to be my brother, I'll jolly well get you to tackle the lawyers instead of me — boring old idiots! I say — I'm going to take it easy now!'

He settled himself in his chair with a long breath, and his eyelids fell. He was speaking, as they all knew, of the making of his will. Mrs. Gaddesden stooped

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piteously and kissed him. Elizabeth's face quivered. She put her arm round her mother and led her away. Anderson went to summon Philip's servant.

A little later Anderson again descended the dark staircase, leaving Philip in high spirits and apparently much better.

In the doorway of the drawing-room stood a white form. Then the man's passion, so long dyked and barriered, had its way. He sprang towards her. She retreated, catching her breath; and in the shadows of the empty room she sank into his arms. In the crucible of that embrace all things melted and changed. His hesitations and doubts, all that hampered his free will and purpose, whether it were the sorrows and humiliations of the past — or the compunctions and demurs of the present — dropped away from him as unworthy not of himself, but of Elizabeth. She had made him master of herself, and her fate; and he boldly and loyally took up the part. He had refused to become the mere appanage of her life, because he was already pledged to that great idea he called his country. She loved him the more for it; and now he had only to abound in the same sense, in order to hold and keep the nature which had answered so finely to his own. He had so borne himself as to wipe out all the social and external inequalities between them. What she had given him, she had had to sue him to take. But now that he had taken it, she knew herself a weak woman on his breast, and she realised with a happy tremor that he would make her no more apologies for his love, or for his story. Rather, he stood upon that dignity she herself had given him, — her lover, and the captain of her life!

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EPILOGUE

ABOUT nine months later than the events told in the last chapter, the August sun, as it descended upon a lake in that middle region of the northern Rockies which is known as yet only to the Indian trapper, and — on certain tracks — to a handful of white explorers, shone on a boat containing two persons — Anderson and Elizabeth. It was but twenty-four hours since they had reached the lake, in the course of a long camping expedition involving the company of two guides, a couple of half-breed *voyageurs*, and a string of sixteen horses. No white foot had ever before trodden the slender beaches of the lake; its beauty of forest and water, of peak and crag, of sun and shadow, the terror of its storms, the loveliness of its summer, — only some stray Indian hunter, once or twice in a century perhaps, throughout all the æons of human history, had ever beheld them.

But now, here were Anderson and Elizabeth! — first invaders of an inviolate Nature, pioneers of a long future line of travellers and worshippers.

They had spent the day of summer sunshine in canoeing on the broad waters, exploring the green bays, and venturing a long way up a beautiful winding arm which seemed to lose itself in the bosom of superb forest-skirted mountains, whence glaciers descended, and cataracts leapt sheer into the glistening water. Now they were floating slowly towards the little promontory

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where their two guides had raised a couple of white tents, and the smoke of a fire was rising into the evening air.

Sunset was on the jagged and snow-clad heights that shut in the lake to the eastward. The rose of the sky had been caught by the water and interwoven with its own lustrous browns and cool blues; while fathom-deep beneath the shining web of colour gleamed the reflected snows and the forest slopes sliding downwards to infinity. A few bird-notes were in the air, — the scream of an eagle, the note of a whip-poor-will, and far away across the lake a dense flight of wild duck rose above a reedy river-mouth, black against a pale band of sky.

They were close now to the shore, and to a spot where lightning and storm had ravaged the pines and left a few open spaces wherein the sun might work. Elizabeth, in delight, pointed to the beds of wild strawberries crimsoning the slopes, intermingled with stretches of bilberry, and streaks of blue and purple asters. But a wilder life was there. Far away the antlers of a swimming moose could be seen above the quiet lake. Anderson, sweeping the lake-side with his field glass, pointed to the ripped tree-trunks, which showed where the brown bear or the grizzly had been, and to the tracks of lynx or fox on the firm yellow sand. And as they rounded the point of a little cove they came upon a group of deer who had come down to drink.

The gentle creatures were not alarmed at their approach; they raised their heads in the red light, seeing man perhaps for the first time, but they did not fly. Anderson stayed the boat, and he and Elizabeth watched them with enchantment — their slender bod-

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ies and proud necks, the bright sand at their feet, the brown water in front, the forest behind.

Elizabeth drew a long breath of joy, — looking back again at the dying glory of the lake, and the great thunder-clouds piled above the forest.

'Where are we exactly?' she said. 'Give me our bearings.'

'We are about seventy miles north of the main line of the C.P.R. and about forty or fifty miles from the projected line of the Grand Trunk Pacific,' said Anderson. 'Make haste, dearest, and name your lake! — for where we come, others will follow.'

So Elizabeth named it — Lake George — after her husband; seeing that it was his topographical divination, his tracking of the lake through the ingenious unravelling of a score of Indian clues which had led them at last to that Pisgah height whence the silver splendour of it had first been seen. But the name was so hotly repudiated by Anderson on the ground of there being already a famous and an historical Lake George on the American continent, that the probability is, when that noble sheet of water comes to be generally visited of mankind, it will be known rather as Lake Elizabeth; and so those early ambitions of Elizabeth which she had expressed to Philip in the first days of her Canadian journeying, will be fulfilled.

Alas! — poor Philip! Elizabeth's black serge dress, and the black ribbon on her white sun-hat were the outward tokens of a grief, cherished deep in her protesting, pitiful heart. Her brother had lived for some four months after her engagement to Anderson; always, in spite of encouraging doctors, under the same sharp

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premonition of death which had dictated his sudden change of attitude towards his Canadian friend. In the January of the new year, Anderson had joined them at Bordighera, and there, after many alternating hopes and fears, a sudden attack of pneumonia had slit the thin-spun life. A few weeks later, at Mrs. Gaddesden's urgent desire, and while she was in the care of a younger sister to whom she was tenderly attached, there had been a quiet wedding at Genoa, and a very pale and sad Elizabeth had been carried by her Anderson to some of the beloved Italian towns, where for so long she had reaped a yearly harvest of delight. In Rome, Florence, and Venice she must needs rouse herself, if only to show the keen novice eyes beside her what to look at, and to grapple with the unexpected remarks which the spectacle evoked from Anderson. He looked in respectful silence at Bellini and Tintoret; but the industrial growth of the north, the strikes of *braccianti* on the central plains, and the poverty of Sicily and the south — in these problems he was soon deeply plunged, teaching himself Italian in order to understand them.

Then they had returned to Mrs. Gaddesden, and to the surrender of Martindale to its new master. For the estate went to a cousin, and when the beauty and the burden of it were finally gone, Philip's gentle ineffectual mother departed with relief to the moss-grown dower-house beside Bassenthwaite lake, there to sorrow for her only son, and to find in the expansion of Elizabeth's life, in Elizabeth's letters, and the prospects of Elizabeth's visits, the chief means left of courage and resignation. Philip's love for Anderson, his actual death in those strong arms, had strengthened immeasurably

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the latter's claim upon her; and in March she parted with him and Elizabeth, promising them boldly that she would come to them in the fall, and spend a Canadian winter with them.

Then Anderson and Elizabeth journeyed West in hot haste to face a general election. Anderson was returned, and during three or four months at Ottawa, Elizabeth was introduced to Canadian politics, and to the swing and beat of those young interests and developing national hopes which, even after London, and for the Londoner, lend romance and significance to the simpler life of Canada's nascent capital. But through it all both she and Anderson pined for the West, and when Parliament rose in early July, they fled first to their rising farm-buildings on one of the tributaries of the Saskatchewan, and then, till the homestead was ready, and the fall ploughing in sight, they had gone to the Rockies, in order that they might gratify a passionate wish of Elizabeth's — to get for once beyond beaten tracks, and surprise the unknown. She pleaded for it as their real honeymoon. It might never be possible again; for the toils of life would soon have snared them.

And so, after a month's wandering beyond all reach of civilisation, they were here in the wild heart of Manitou's wild land, and the red and white of Elizabeth's cheek, the fire in her eyes showed how the god's spell had worked. . . .

The evening came. Their frugal meal, prepared by one of the Indian half-breeds, and eaten in a merry community among beds of orchids and vetch, was soon done; and the husband and wife pushed off again in the

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boat — for the densely wooded shores of the lake were impassable on foot — to watch the moon rise on this mysterious land.

And as they floated there, often hand in hand, talking a little, but dreaming more — Anderson's secret thoughts reviewed the past year, and the incredible fortune which had given him Elizabeth.

Deep in his nature was still the old pessimism, the old sadness. Could he make her happy? In the close contact of marriage he realised all that had gone to the making of her subtle and delicate being — the influences of a culture and tradition of which he was mostly ignorant, though her love was opening many gates to him. He felt himself in many respects her inferior, — and there were dark moments when it seemed to him inevitable that she must tire of him. But whenever they overshadowed him, the natural reaction of a vigorous manhood was not far off. Patriotism and passion — a profound and simple pride — stood up and wrestled with his doubt. She was not less, but more, than he had imagined her. What was in truth his safeguard and hers, was the fact that, at the very root of her, Elizabeth was a poet! She had seen Canada and Anderson from the beginning in the light of imagination; and that light was not going to fail her now. For it sprang from the truth and glow of her own nature; by the help of it she *made* her world; and Canada and Anderson moved under it, nobly seen and nobly felt.

This he half shrinkingly understood, and he repaid her with adoration, and a wisely yielding mind. For her sake he was ready to do a hundred things he had never yet thought of, reading, inquiring, observing, in

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wider circles and over an ampler range. For as the New World, through Anderson, worked on Elizabeth, — so Europe, through Elizabeth, worked on Anderson. And thus, from life to life, goes on the great interpenetrating, intermingling flux of things.

It seemed as though the golden light could not die from the lake, though midsummer was long past. And presently up into its midst floated the moon, and as they watched the changing of the light upon the northern snow-peaks, they talked of the vast undiscovered regions beyond, of the valleys and lakes that no survey has ever mapped, and the rivers that from the beginning of time have spread their pageant of beauty for the heavens alone; then, of that sudden stir and uproar of human life, — prospectors, navvies, lumbermen — that is now beginning to be heard along that narrow strip where the new line of the Grand Trunk Pacific is soon to pierce the wilderness, — yet another link in the girdling of the world. And further yet, their fancy followed, ever northward, — solitude beyond solitude, desert beyond desert — till, in the Yukon, it lit upon gold-seeking man, dominating, at last, a terrible and hostile earth, which had starved and tortured and slain him in his thousands, before he could tame her to his will.

And last — by happy reaction — it was the prairies again — their fruitful infinity — and the emigrant rush from East and South.

'When we are old' — said Elizabeth softly, slipping her hand into Anderson's — 'will all this courage die out of us? Now — nothing of all this vastness, this

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mystery frightens me. I feel a kind of insolent, superhuman strength! — as if I — even I, could guide a plough, reap corn, shoot rapids, "catch a wild goat by the hair — and hurl my lances at the sun!"'

'With this hand?' said Anderson, looking at it with a face of amusement. But Elizabeth took no heed, — except to slip the other hand after it — both into the same shelter.

She pursued her thought, murmuring the words, the white lids falling over her eyes: —

'But when one is feeble and dying, will it all grow awful to me? Suddenly — shall I long to creep into some old, old corner of England or Italy — and feel round me close walls, and dim small rooms, and dear, stuffy, familiar streets that thousands and thousands of feet have worn before mine?'

Anderson smiled at her. He had guided their boat into a green cove where there was a little strip of open ground between the water and the forest. They made fast the boat, and Anderson found a mossy seat under a tall pine from which the lightning of a recent storm had stripped a great limb, leaving a crimson gash in the trunk. And there Elizabeth nestled to him, and he with his arm about her, and the intoxication of her slender beauty mastering his senses, tried to answer her as a plain man may. The commonplaces of passion — its foolish promises — its blind confidence — its trembling joy: — there is no other path for love to travel by, and Elizabeth and Anderson trod it like their fellows.

Six months later on a clear winter evening Elizabeth was standing in the sitting-room of a Saskatchewan

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farmhouse. She looked out upon a dazzling world of snow, lying thinly under a pale greenish sky in which the sunset clouds were just beginning to gather. The land before her sloped to a broad frozen river up which a waggon and a team of horses was plodding its way, — the steam rising in clouds round the bodies of the horses and men. On a track leading to the river a sledge was running, — the bells jingling in the still, light air. To her left were the great barns of the homestead, and beyond, the long low cowshed, with a group of Shorthorns and Herefords standing beside the open door. Her eyes delighted in the whiteness of the snow, in the touches of orange and scarlet in the clumps of bush, in a note of crimson here and there, among the withered reeds pushing through the snow, or in the thin background of a few taller trees, — 'the shelter-belt' of the farm — rising brown and sharp against the blue.

Within the farmhouse sitting-room flamed a great wood fire, which shed its glow on the white walls, on the prints and photographs and books which were still Elizabeth's companions in the heart of the prairies, as they had been at Martindale. The room was simplicity itself, yet full of charm, with its blue druggeting, its pale green chairs and hangings. At its further end, a curtain half drawn aside showed another room, a dining-room, also fire-lit — with a long table spread for tea, a bare floor of polished wood blocks, and a few prints on the walls.

The waggon she had seen on the river approached the homestead. The man who was driving it, — a strong-limbed, fair-haired fellow — lifted his cap as he saw Elizabeth at the window. She nodded and smiled at

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him. He was Edward Tyson, one of the two engine-drivers who had taken her and Philip through the Kicking Horse Pass. His friend also could be seen standing among the cattle gathered in the farmyard. They had become Anderson's foremen and partners on his farm of twelve hundred acres, of which only some three hundred acres had been as yet brought under the plough. The rest was still virgin prairie, pasturing a large mixed herd of cattle and horses. The two North-Country men had been managing it all in Anderson's Parliamentary absences, and were quite as determined as he to make it a centre of science and progress for a still remote and sparsely peopled district. One of the brothers was married, and lived in a small frame-house a stone's throw from the main buildings of the farm. The other was the head of the 'bothy' or boarding-house for hired men, a long low building, with cheerful white-curtained windows, which could be seen just beyond the cow-house.

As she looked over the broad whiteness of the farmlands, above which the sunset clouds were now tossing in climbing lines of crimson and gold, rising steeply to a zenith of splendour, and opening here and there, amid their tumult, to show a further heaven of untroubled blue — Elizabeth thought with lamentation that their days on the farm were almost done. The following week would see them at Ottawa for the opening of the session. Anderson was full of Parliamentary projects; important work for the Province had been entrusted to him; and in the general labour policy of the Dominion he would find himself driven to take a prominent part. But all the while his heart and Elizabeth's were in the land and its problems; for them the true, the entranc-

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ing Canada was in the wilds. And for Anderson, who through so many years, as an explorer and engineer, had met Nature face to face, his will against hers, in a direct and simple conflict, the tedious and tortuous methods of modern politics were not easy to learn. He must indeed learn them — he was learning them; and the future had probably great things in store for him, as a politician. But he came back to the Saskatchewan farm with joy, and he would leave it reluctantly.

'If only I was n't so rich!' thought Elizabeth, with compunction. For she often looked with envy on her neighbours who had gone through the real hardships of the country; who had bought their Canadian citizenship with the toil and frugality of years. It seemed to her sometimes that she was step-child rather than daughter of the dear new land, in spite of her yearning towards it.

And yet money had brought its own romance. It had enabled Anderson to embark on this ample farm of nearly two square miles, to staff it with the best labour to be got, on a basis of co-partnership, to bring herds of magnificent cattle into these parklike prairies, to set up horse-breeding, and to establish on the borders of the farm a large creamery which was already proving an attraction for settlers. It was going to put into Elizabeth's hands the power of helping the young University of Strathcona just across the Albertan border, and perhaps of founding in their own provincial capital of Regina a training college for farm-students — girls and boys — which might reproduce for the West the college of St. Anne's, that wonderful home of all the useful arts, which an ever-generous wealth has given to the

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Province of Quebec. Already she had in her mind a cottage hospital — sorely wanted — for the little town of Donaldminster, wherein the weaklings of this great emigrant army now pouring into the country might find help.

Her heart, indeed, was full of schemes for help. Here she was, a woman of high education, and much wealth, in the midst of this nascent community. Her thoughts pondered the life of these scattered farms — of the hard-working women in them — the lively, rosy-cheeked children. It was her ambition so to live among them that they might love her — trust her — use her.

Meanwhile their own home was a 'temple of industrious peace.' Elizabeth was a prairie housewife like her neighbours. She had indeed brought out with her from Cumberland one of the Martindale gardeners and his young wife and sister; and the two North-Country women shared with the farm mistress the work of the house, till such time as Anderson should help the husband to a quarter section of his own, and take someone else to train in his place. But the atmosphere of the house was one of friendly equality. Elizabeth — who had herself gone into training for a few weeks at St. Anne's — prided herself on her dairy, her bread, her poultry. One might have seen her, on this winter afternoon, in her black serge dress with white cap and apron, slipping into the kitchen behind the dining-room, testing the scones in the oven, looking to the preparations for dinner, putting away stores, and chatting to the clear-eyed women who loved her, and would not for the world have let her try her strength too much. For she who was so eagerly planning the help of others must

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now be guarded and cherished herself—lest ill befall!

But now she was at the window, watching for Anderson.

The trail from Donaldminster to Battleford passed in front of the house, dividing the farm. Presently there came slowly along it a covered waggon drawn by a pair of sorry horses and piled at the back with household possessions. In front sat a man of slouching carriage, and in the interior of the waggon another figure could be dimly seen. The whole turn-out gave an impression of poverty and misfortune; and Elizabeth looked at it curiously.

Suddenly, the waggon drew up with a jerk at the gate of the farm, and the man descended, with difficulty, his limbs being evidently numb with cold.

Elizabeth caught up a fur cloak and ran to the door.

'Could you give us a bit of shelter for the night?' said the man sheepishly. 'We'd thought of getting on to Battleford, but the little un's bad — and the missus perished with cold. We'd give you no trouble if we might warm ourselves a bit.'

And he looked under his eyebrows at Elizabeth, at the bright fire behind her, and all the comfort of the new farmhouse. Yet under his shuffling manner there was a certain note of confidence. He was appealing to that Homeric hospitality which prevails throughout the farms of the Northwest.

And in five minutes, the horses were in the barn, the man sitting by the kitchen fire, while Elizabeth was ministering to the woman and the child. The newcomers made a forlorn trio. They came from a district

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some fifty miles further south, and were travelling north in order to take shelter for a time with relations. The mother was a girl of twenty, worn with hardship and privation. The father, an English labourer, had taken up free land, but in spite of much help from a paternal Government, had not been able to fulfil his statutory obligation, and had now forfeited his farm. There was a history of typhoid fever, and as Elizabeth soon suspected, an incipient history of drink. In the first two years of his Canadian life the man had worked for a farmer during the summer, and loafed in Winnipeg during the winter. There demoralisation had begun, and as Elizabeth listened, the shadow of the Old World seemed to be creeping across the radiant Canadian landscape. The same woes? — the same weaknesses? — the same problems of an unsound urban life?

Her heart sank for a moment — only to provoke an instant reaction of cheerfulness. No! — in Canada the human will had still room to work, and is not yet choked by a jungle growth of interests.

She waited for Anderson to come in, and meanwhile she warmed and comforted the mother. The poor girl looked round her in amazement at the pretty spacious room, as she spread her hands, knotted and coarsened by work, to the blaze. Elizabeth held her sickly babe, rocking it and crooning to it, while upstairs one of the kind-eyed Cumberland women was getting a warm bath ready, and lighting a fire in the guest-room.

'How old is it?' she asked.

'Thirteen months.'

'You ought to give up nursing it. It would be better for you both.'

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'I tried giving it a bit o' what we had ourselves,' said the mother, dully — 'but I nearly lost her.'

'I should think so!' laughed Elizabeth indignantly; and she began to preach rational ways of feeding and caring for the child, while the mother sat by, despondent, and too crushed and hopeless to take much notice. Presently Elizabeth gave her back the babe, and went to fetch hot tea and bread and butter.

'Shall I come and get it in the kitchen?' said the woman, rising.

'No, no — stay where you are!' cried Elizabeth. And she was just carrying back a laden tray from the dining-room when Anderson caught her.

'Darling! — that 's too heavy for you! — what are you about?'

'There 's a woman in there who 's got to be fed — and there 's a man in there' — she pointed to the kitchen — 'who 's got to be talked to. Hopeless case! — so you 'd better go and set about it!'

She laughed happily in his face, and he snatched a kiss from her as he carried off the tray.

The woman by the fire rose again in amazement as she saw the broad-shouldered handsome man who was bringing in the tea. Anderson had been tramping through the thin-lying snow all day, inquiring into the water-supply of a distant portion of the farm. He was ruddy with exercise, and the physical strength that seemed to radiate from him intimidated the wanderer.

'Where were you bound to?' he said kindly, as he put down the tea beside her.

The woman, falteringly, told her story. Anderson frowned a little.

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'Well, I'd better go and talk to your husband. Mrs. Anderson will look after you.'

And Elizabeth held the baby, while the woman fed languidly — too tired and spiritless indeed to eat.

When she could be coaxed no further, Elizabeth took her and the babe upstairs.

'I never saw anything like this in these parts!' cried the girl, looking round her at the white-tiled bath-room.

'Oh, they're getting quite common!' laughed Elizabeth. 'See how nice and warm the water is! Shall we bathe the baby?' And presently the child lay warm and swaddled in its mother's arms, dressed in some baby-clothes produced by Elizabeth from a kind of travellers' cupboard at the top of the stairs. Then the mother was induced to try the bath for herself, while Elizabeth tried her hand at spoon-feeding the baby; and in half an hour she had them both in bed, in the bright spare-room, — the young mother's reddish hair unbound lying a splendid mass on the white pillows, and a strange expression — as of some long tension giving way — on her pinched face.

'We'll not know how to thank you' — she said brokenly. 'We were just at the last. Tom would n't ask no one to help us before. But we'd only a few shillings left — we thought at Battleford we'd sell our bits of things — perhaps that'd take us through.' She looked piteously at Elizabeth, the tears gathering in her eyes.

'Oh! well, we'll see about that!' said Elizabeth, as she tucked the blankets round her. 'Nobody need starve in this country! Mr. Anderson 'll be able perhaps to think of something. Now you go to sleep, and we'll look after your husband.'

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Anderson joined his wife in the sitting-room, with a perplexed countenance. The man was a poor creature, — and the beginnings of the drink-craving were evident.

'Give him a chance,' said Elizabeth. 'You want one more man in the bothy.'

She sat down beside him, while Anderson pondered, his legs stretched to the fire. A train of thought ran through his mind, embittered by the memory of his father.

He was roused from it by the perception that Elizabeth was looking tired. Instantly he was all tenderness and anxious misgiving. He made her lie down on the sofa by the fire, and brought her some important letters from Ottawa to read, and the English newspapers.

From the elementary human need with which their minds had just been busy, their talk passed on to national and imperial affairs. They discussed them as equals and comrades, each bringing their own contribution.

'In a fortnight we shall be in Ottawa!' sighed Elizabeth, at last.

Anderson smiled at her plaintive voice.

'Darling! — is it such a tragedy?'

'No, I shall be as keen as anybody else when we get there. But — we are so happy here!'

'Is that really, really true?' asked Anderson, taking her hand and pressing it to his lips.

'Yes' — she murmured — 'yes — but it will be truer still next year!'

They looked at each other tenderly. Anderson stooped and kissed her, long and closely.

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He was called away to give some directions to his men, and Elizabeth lay dreaming in the firelight of the past and the future, her hands clasped on her breast, her eyes filling with soft tears. Upstairs, in the room above her, the emigrant mother and baby lay sleeping in the warmth and shelter gathered round them by Elizabeth. But in tending them, she had been also feeding her own yearning, quickening her own hope. She had given herself to a man whom she adored, and she carried his child on her heart. Many and various strands would have gone to the weaving of that little soul; she trembled sometimes to think of them. But no fear with her lasted long. It was soon lost in the deep poetic faith that Anderson's child in her arms would be the heir of two worlds, the pledge of a sympathy, a union, begun long before her marriage in the depths of the spirit, when her heart first went out to Canada, — to the beauty of the Canadian land, and the freedom of the Canadian life.

END OF CANADIAN BORN

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